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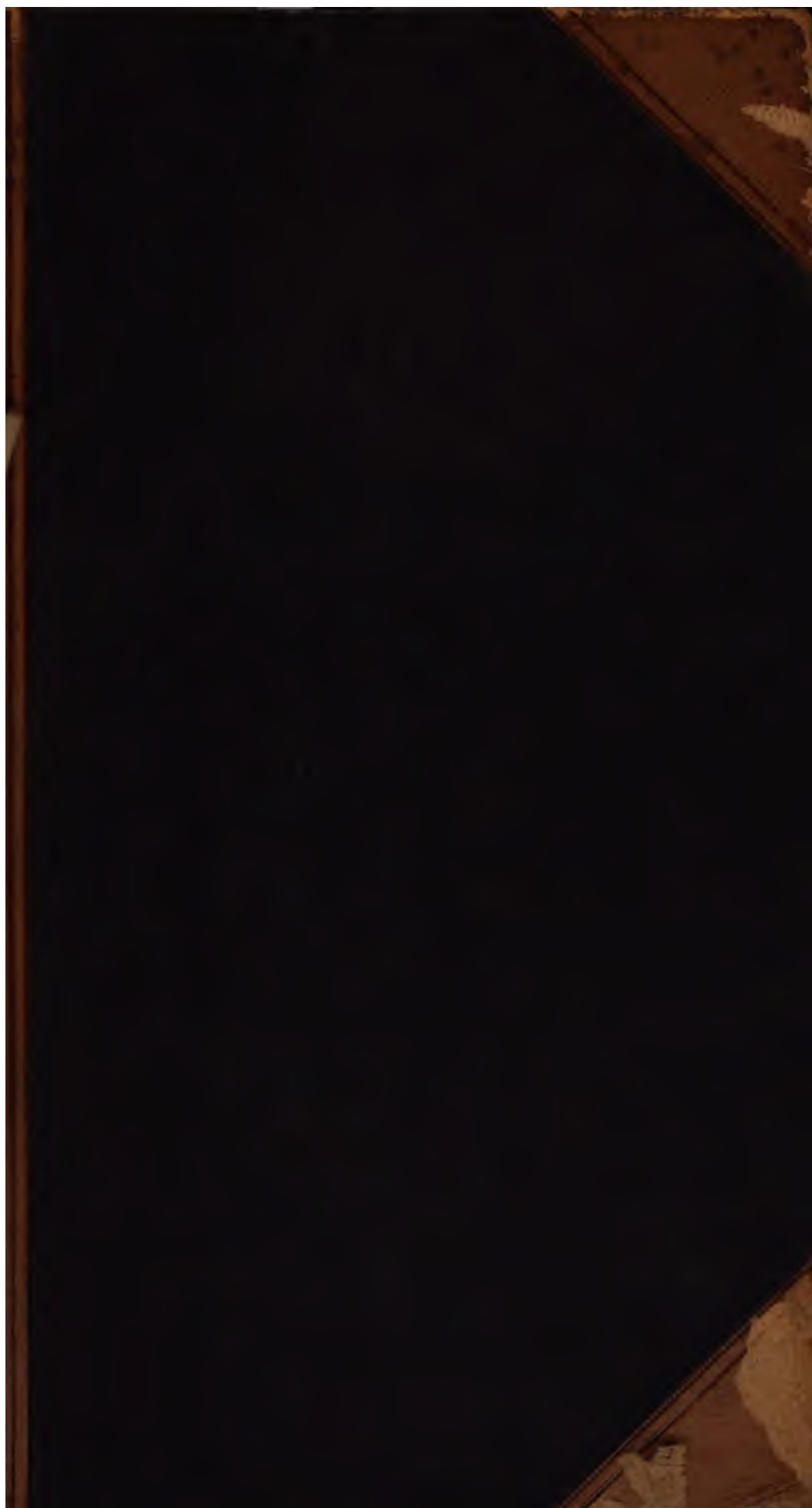
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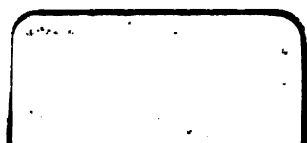
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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XXX.

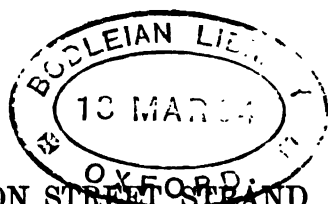
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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 713. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JULY 29, 1882.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XVI. MR. AND MISS GREY.

It was now the middle of October, and it may be said that from the time in which old Mr. Scarborough had declared his intention of showing that the elder of his two sons had no right to the property, Mr. Grey, the lawyer, had been so occupied with the Scarborough affairs as to have had left him hardly a moment for other considerations. He had a partner, who during these four months had in fact carried on the business. One difficulty had grown out of another till Mr. Grey's whole time had been occupied; and all his thoughts had been filled with Mr. Scarborough, which is a matter of much greater moment to a man than the loss of his time. The question of Mountjoy Scarborough's position had been first submitted to him in June. October had now been reached, and Mr. Grey had been out of town only for a fortnight, during which fortnight he had been occupied entirely in unravelling the mystery. He had at first refused altogether to have anything to do with the unravelling, and had desired that some other lawyer might be employed. But it had gradually come to pass that he had entered heart and soul into the case, and, with many execrations on his own part against Mr. Scarborough, could find a real interest in nothing else. He had begun his investigations with a thorough wish to discover that Mountjoy Scarborough was in truth the heir. Though he had never loved the young man, and, as he went on with his investigations, became aware that the whole property would go to the creditors should he succeed in proving that Mountjoy was the heir, yet for the sake of

abstract honesty he was most anxious that it should be so. And he could not bear to think that he and other lawyers had been taken in by the wily craft of such a man as the squire of Tretton. It went thoroughly against the grain with him to have to acknowledge that the estate would become the property of Augustus. But it was so, and he did acknowledge it. It was proved to him that in spite of all the evidence which he had hitherto seen in the matter, the squire had not married his wife until after the birth of his eldest son. He did acknowledge it, and he said bravely that it must be so. Then there came down upon him a crowd of enemies in the guise of baffled creditors, all of whom believed, or professed to believe, that he, Mr. Grey, was in league with the squire to rob them of their rights. If it could be proved that Mountjoy had no claim to the property, then would it go nominally to Augustus, who according to their showing was also one of the confederates, and the property could thus, they said, be divided. Very shortly the squire would be dead, and then the confederates would get everything, to the utter exclusion of poor Mr. Tyrrwhit, and poor Mr. Samuel Hart, and all the other poor creditors who would thus be denuded, defrauded, and robbed by a lawyer's trick. It was in this spirit that Mr. Grey was attacked by Mr. Tyrrwhit and the others; and Mr. Grey found it very hard to bear.

And then there was another matter which was also very grievous to him. If it were as he now stated; if the squire had been guilty of this fraud; to what punishment would he be subjected? Mountjoy was declared to have been innocent. Mr. Tyrrwhit, as he put the case to his own lawyers, laughed bitterly as he made this suggestion. And Augustus was, of course,

innocent. Then ~~there~~ was renewed laughter. And Mr. Grey! Mr. Grey had of course been innocent. Then the laughter was very loud. Was it to be believed that anybody could be taken in by such a story as this. There was he, Mr. Tyrrwhit; he had ever been known as a sharp fellow; and Mr. Samuel Hart, who was now away on his travels, and the others—they were all of them sharp fellows. Was it to be believed that such a set of gentlemen, so keenly alive to their own interest, should be made the victims of such a trick as this? Not if they knew it! Not if Mr. Tyrrwhit knew it!

It was in this shape that the matter reached Mr. Grey's ears; and then it was asked, if it were so, what would be the punishment to which they would be subjected who had defrauded Mr. Tyrrwhit of his just claim. Mr. Tyrrwhit, who on one occasion made his way into Mr. Grey's presence, wished to get an answer to that question from Mr. Grey. "The man is dying," said Mr. Grey solemnly.

"Dying! He is not more likely to die than you are, from all I hear." At this time rumours of Mr. Scarborough's improved health had reached the creditors in London. Mr. Tyrrwhit had begun to believe that Mr. Scarborough's dangerous condition had been part of the hoax; that there had been no surgeon's knives, no terrible operations, no moment of almost certain death. "I don't believe he's been ill at all," said Mr. Tyrrwhit.

"I cannot help your belief," said Mr. Grey.

"But because a man doesn't die and recovers, is he on that account to be allowed to cheat people as he has cheated me, with impunity?"

"I am not going to defend Mr. Scarborough; but he has not in fact cheated you."

"Who has? Come; do you mean to tell me that if this goes on I shall not have been defrauded of a hundred thousand pounds?"

"Did you ever see Mr. Scarborough on the matter?"

"No; it was not necessary."

"Or have you got his writing to any document? Have you anything to show that he knew what his son was doing when he borrowed money of you? Is it not perfectly clear that he knew nothing about it?"

"Of course he knew nothing about it—then; at that time. It was afterwards that

his fraud began. When he found that the estate was in jeopardy, then the falsehood was concocted."

"Ah, there, Mr. Tyrrwhit, I can only say that I disagree with you. I must express my opinion that if you endeavour to recover your money on that plea you will be beaten. If you can prove fraud of that kind, no doubt you can punish those who have been guilty of it—me among the number."

"I say nothing of that," said Mr. Tyrrwhit.

"But if you have been led into your present difficulty by an illegal attempt on the part of my client to prove an illegitimate son to have been legitimate, and then to have changed his mind for certain purposes, I do not see how you are to punish him. The act will have been attempted and not completed. And it will have been an act concerning his son and not concerning you."

"Not concerning me?" shrieked Mr. Tyrrwhit.

"Certainly not legally. You are not in a position to prove that he knew that his son was borrowing money from you on the credit of the estate. As a fact he certainly did not know it."

"We shall see about that," said Mr. Tyrrwhit.

"Then you must see about it, but not with my aid. As a fact I am telling you all that I know about it. If I could I would prove Mountjoy Scarborough to be his father's heir to-morrow. Indeed, I am altogether on your side in the matter—if you would believe it." Here Mr. Tyrrwhit again laughed. "But you will not believe it, and I do not ask you to do so. As it is, we must be opposed to each other."

"Where is the young man?" asked Mr. Tyrrwhit.

"Ah, that is a question I am not bound to answer, even if I knew. It is a matter on which I say nothing. You have lent him money, at an exorbitant rate of interest."

"It is not true."

"At any rate it seems so to me; and it is out of the question that I should assist you in recovering it. You did it at your own peril, and not on my advice. Good-morning, Mr. Tyrrwhit." Then Mr. Tyrrwhit went his way, not without sundry threats as to the whole Scarborough family.

It was very hard upon Mr. Grey, because he certainly was an honest man

and had taken up the matter simply with a view of learning the truth. It had been whispered to him within the last day or two that Mountjoy Scarborough had lately been seen alive, and gambling with reckless prodigality at Monte Carlo. It had only been told to him as probably true; but he certainly believed it. But he knew nothing of the details of his disappearance, and had not been much surprised, as he had never believed that the young man had been murdered or had made away with himself. But he had heard before that of the quarrel in the street between him and Harry Annesley. And the story had been told to him so as to fall with great discredit on Harry Annesley's head. According to that story, Henry Annesley had struck his foe during the night, and left him for dead upon the pavement. Then Mountjoy Scarborough had been missing, and Henry Annesley had told no one of the quarrel. There had been some girl in question. So much and no more Mr. Grey had heard, and was, of course, inclined to think that Harry Annesley must have behaved very badly. But of the mode of Mountjoy's subsequent escape he had heard nothing.

Mr. Grey at this time was living down at Fulham in a small old-fashioned house which overlooked the river, and was called the Manor House. He would have said that it was his custom to go home every day by an omnibus, but he did in truth almost always remain at his office so late as to make it necessary that he should return by a cab. He was a man fairly well to do in the world, as he had no one depending on him but one daughter—no one, that is to say, whom he was obliged to support. But he had a married sister with a scapegrace husband and six daughters, whom, in fact, he did support. Mrs. Carroll, with the kindest intentions in the world, had come and lived near him. She had taken a genteel house in Bolsover Terrace, a genteel new house on the Fulham Road, about a quarter of a mile from her brother. Mr. Grey lived in the old Manor House, a small uncomfortable place, which had a nook of its own, close upon the water, and with a lovely little lawn. It was certainly most uncomfortable as a gentleman's residence, but no consideration would induce Mr. Grey to sell it. There were but two sitting-rooms in it, and one was for the most part uninhabited. The upstairs drawing-room was furnished, but anyone with half an eye could see that

it was never used. A "stray" caller might be shown up there, but callers of that class were very uncommon in Mr. Grey's establishment. With his own domestic arrangements Mr. Grey would have been quite contented, had it not been for Mrs. Carroll. It was now some years since he had declared that though Mr. Carroll—or Captain Carroll, as he had then been called—was an improvident, worthless, drunken Irishman, he would never see his sister want. The consequence was that Carroll had come with his wife and six daughters, and taken a house close to him. There are such "whips and scorns" in the world to which a man shall be so subject as to have the whole tenor of his life changed by them. The hero bears them heroically, making no complaints to those around him. The common man shrinks, and squeals, and cringes, so that he is known to those around him as one specially persecuted. In this respect Mr. Grey was a grand hero. When he spoke to his friends of Mrs. Carroll, his friends were taught to believe that his outside arrangements with his sister were perfectly comfortable. No doubt there did creep out among those who were most intimate with him a knowledge that Mr. Carroll—for the captain had in truth never been more than a lieutenant, and had now long since sold out—was impecunious, and a trouble rather than otherwise. But I doubt whether there was a single inhabitant of the neighbourhood of Fulham who was aware that Mrs. Carroll and the Miss Carrolls cost Mr. Grey on an average above six hundred a year.

There was one in Mr. Grey's family to whom he was so attached that he would, to oblige her, have thrown over the whole Carroll family; but of this that one person would not hear. She hated the whole Carroll family with an almost unholy hatred of which she herself was endeavouring to repent daily, but in vain. She could not do other than hate them; but she could do other than allow her father to withdraw his fostering protection; for this one person was Mr. Grey's only daughter and his one close domestic associate. Miss Dorothy Grey was known well to all the neighbourhood, and was both feared and revered. As we shall have much to do with her in the telling of our story, it may be well to make her stand plainly before the reader's eyes. In the first place it must be understood that she was mother-

less, brotherless, and sisterless. She had been Mr. Grey's only child, and her mother had been dead for fifteen or sixteen years. She was now about thirty years of age, but was generally regarded as ranging somewhere between forty and fifty. "If she isn't nearer fifty than forty, I'll eat my old shoes," said a lady in the neighbourhood to a gentleman. "I've known her these twenty years, and she's not altered in the least." As Dolly Grey had been only ten twenty years ago, the lady must have been wrong. But it is singular how a person's memory of things may be created out of their present appearances. Dorothy herself had apparently no desire to set right this erroneous opinion which the neighbourhood entertained respecting her. She did not seem to care whether she was supposed to be thirty, or forty, or fifty. Of youth, as a means of getting lovers, she entertained a profound contempt. That no lover would ever come she was assured, and would not at all have known what to do with one had he come. The only man for whom she had ever felt the slightest regard was her father. For some women about she did entertain a passionless well-regulated affection, but they were generally the poor, the afflicted, or the aged. It was, however, always necessary that the person so signalised should be submissive. Now, Mrs. Carroll, Mr. Grey's sister, had long since shown that she was not submissive enough, nor were the girls, the eldest of whom was a pert, ugly, well-grown minx, now about eighteen years old. The second sister, who was seventeen, was supposed to be a beauty, but which of the two was the more odious in the eyes of their cousin it would be impossible to say.

Miss Dorothy Grey was Dolly only to her father. Had any one else so ventured to call her, she would have started up at once, the outraged aged female of fifty. Even her aunt, who was trouble enough to her, felt that it could not be so. Her uncle tried it once, and she declined to come into his presence for a month, letting it be fully understood that she had been insulted.

And yet she was not, according to my idea, by any means an ill-favoured young woman. It is true that she wore spectacles; and, as she always desired to have her eyes about with her, she never put them off when out of bed. But how many German girls do the like, and are not accounted for that reason to be plain? She was tall and well-made, we may almost say robust.

She had the full use of all her limbs, and was never ashamed of using them. I think she was wrong when she would be seen to wheel the barrow about the garden, and that her hands must have suffered in her attempts to live down the conventional absurdities of the world. It is true that she did wear gloves during her gardening, but she wore them only in obedience to her father's request. She had bright eyes, somewhat far apart, and well-made, wholesome, regular features. Her nose was large, and her mouth was large, but they were singularly intelligent, and full of humour when she was pleased in conversation. As to her hair, she was too indifferent to enable one to say that it was attractive; but it was smoothed twice a day, was very copious, and always very clean. Indeed, for cleanliness from head to foot she was a model. "She is very clean, but then it's second to nothing to her," had said a sarcastic old lady who had meant to imply that Miss Dorothy Grey was not constant at church. But the sarcastic old lady had known nothing about it. Dorothy Grey never stayed away from morning church unless her presence were desired by her father, and for once or twice that she might do so, she would take her father with her three or four times—against the grain with him it must be acknowledged.

But the most singular attribute of the lady's appearance has still to be mentioned. She always wore a slouch hat, which from motives of propriety she called her bonnet, which gave her a singular appearance, as though it had been put on to thatch her entirely from the weather. It was made generally of black straw, and was round, equal at all points of the circle, and was fastened with broad brown ribbons. It was supposed in the neighbourhood to be completely weather-tight. The unimaginative nature of Fulham did not allow the Fulham mind to gather in the fact that, at the same time, she might possess two or three such hats. But they were undoubtedly precisely similar, and she would wear them in London with exactly the same indifference as in the comparatively rural neighbourhood of her own residence. She would in truth go up and down in the omnibus, and would do so alone without the slightest regard to the opinion of any of her neighbours. The Carroll girls would laugh at her behind her back, but no Carroll girl had been seen ever to smile before her face, instigated to do so by their cousin's vagaries.

But I have not yet mentioned that attribute of Miss Grey's which is perhaps the most essential in her character. It is necessary at any rate that they should know it who wish to understand her nature. When it had once been brought home to her that duty required her to do this thing or the other, or to say this word or another, the thing would be done or the word said let the result be what it might. Even to the displeasure of her father, the word was said or the thing was done. Such a one was Dolly Grey.

UP IN THE GALLERY.

THE gallery of a theatre can never be enticing, surely. Further, the proposal to pass a whole evening in the gallery of a theatre would be shrunk from by most ranks of people, with a little (or with considerable) dismay. Let the gallery be the gallery, moreover, of the Victoria (shortened, for convenience, into "The Vic"); let the gallery cost but threepence to get into it; let the gallery be built to pack in and entertain a thousand people, overlooking a pit that can commodiously seat a thousand people more; let the gallery (as a last suggestion) be come upon all at once, by gas-light, at a corner of the "New Cut," the place revealing itself in all its glare and flare, in all its full tide of crowd and traffic, and uproar, and marketing, in all its repellent mal-odour of coarse tobacco and fish already sliced and fried, and if the mind should be stirred to absolute recoil, it would be no wonder. Then there is the thought flooding in that it is possible to pay six shillings for a private-box; obtaining thereby so much of safe separation and seclusion; escaping instantly this plate-glass and placard, this outside ugliness of wall and window and harlequin-streaks of colour. And now that the impulse for this has come, shall not the impulse be yielded to?

Courage, though. Things that have been undertaken, should be things to be efficiently carried out; and let this thing be no exception, but go on, as it should go on, to due and complete performance.

And now observe how all of distaste and difficulty can be dispelled. Here is the gallery-door quietly open, now it is approached for the second time; after these few minutes of turn amongst barrows and fading cabbages, amongst cheese and butter, and bacon piles, amongst gleaming tin-

stuff, and trayfuls of cheap yellow and willow crockery. Here is no elbowing, no crushing at the absolute threshold. Here is the pavement, even for a yard or two before it, bare, except for the rush of passers-by. The plain stone stair, rising widely from the wide landing, is quite clear, and turning this corner, and turning this next, as the stairs ascend, here is the pay-place. It can be passed. The threepence admission can be handed in; without even so much as the pressure and the hurry of ticket-taking at a railway-station desk. And turning this other corner, and this other still, as the stairs yet continue winding on, here is the rooftop, peaceably; here flows in a sweep of welcome air; here are oblong openings of calm grey sky; with the view at last below, straight and unimpeded, of the gallery-seats in their steep half-ring (or correctly putting it, in their long ellipse). And as these are very nearly empty, there can be a choice of any one of them to sit on—yes, even if it be decided to clatter downwards from tier to tier, right to the front projecting rail; while, all along, for a certainty, there has been no person to jostle or to interfere, there has been nothing encountered not thoroughly orderly and composed.

What is there in this Victoria Theatre especially? What is there in this threepenny-gallery of it, to be set down? The beginning shall be at the pit. Look into it. It is a principality, compared to this republic here; for people pay sixpence there, quite a reputable piece of money; and the benches are straight, and on a level floor; and the area is wide and open; and it goes back far away, as it should, to hold its full audience of a thousand, good. Also, this shape, or build, allows those lads in white aprons and scarlet coats to go from end to end freely; it allows them to distribute bills of coming entertainments, to give lists of prices (cocoa, a cup for a penny; and coffee and tea, the same; and beef and ham and soup at twopence a plate; and gingerette and raspberryette, and new milk, Zoedone, and so forth). This shape, or build, further, being made better still by a good three-foot-wide ambulatory down the centre of the seats, and by good three-foot-wide ambulatories at the sides, allows the lads to get purchasers for their penny programmes without disturbing non-purchasers around; and they can carry small

square baskets of oranges wherever they go, and they can be little fruitmongers and confectioners, and even little tobacconists and fusee-sellers, without being looked upon by anybody as a dreaded pest. Look also at the pit's front. It is the orchestra; close in; there being here an obliteration of the pit-stalls. And it is an orchestra not concealed; having, in a novel manner, a grand piano as one of the instruments in it, and the rest (when they are heard, presently) well marked and timed by copious drum. Look, again, at the shilling and eighteenpenny seats—those in the balcony and balcony-stalls—the name *à la mode* for the dress-circle. They are as sightly in every detail, except for costliness (crimson wool-stuff having to do duty for Utrecht velvet and tabinette), they are as roomy and well-arranged, as if they had been on the fashionable side of the river and in a fashionable house. They do not contain visitors in evening toilette certainly; but they contain visitors with toilette manners, if this description can be allowed. The audience there, that is to say, are courteous and earnest, and differ outwardly in nothing (except in wearing bonnets and out-door wraps) from an audience booked many weeks in advance at seven shillings or half-a-guinea apiece in reserved seats and stalls. Close to the curtain also there are private boxes, from six shillings the night to a pound; there are the stage-boxes and the royal box and a manager's box; there are two rows of them in all, commencing at the level of the stage and rising up and up. Look at those. No! as it happens, there is no need. The boxes are empty boxes. For it is a Monday night, with a Popular Concert—which is really a Classical Concert—anxiously being prepared. At it some of the advanced pupils of the Royal Academy of Music are about to test their powers (gratuitously) and to get some acquaintance with footlight "business" by a selection of songs and the performance of scenes out of Mozart's delicious *Coel fan Tutti*; and it would be good for these students, and it would be good for all interested in musical growth and instruction, if what the existing Music School in this country has been effecting could be submitted, on such an occasion, to the greatest available amount of able and unfettered encouragement and criticism. But the whirl of the season occupies the fashionable world at this moment, and as fashion dies, as is known, except within recognised miles,

there have been no applications at "The Vic" box-office, there have been no cheques transmitted by post even, in respect of this portion of the auditorium to-night. And so it is that great crimson gaps are there where there might have been intelligent listeners. Noting, therefore, that there are five hundred or six hundred people, perhaps, in the pit; that there are three hundred, perhaps, forming the ellipse that marks the stately balcony, it has come to be, possibly, that there is nothing more, below and far off, to—

Yes—see! There is smoking there, just in the centre of the pit. A tiny light has shot up suddenly, to be as suddenly put out. And there—there is another; and here, again, with the pale violet film, in every case, following and extending, before the whole of the little incident has gone; and there it is, once more—there, all those rows back; and here, much nearer, straight down.

What is doing at "The Vic," by the philanthropic managers of it, is to substitute the coffee-palace for the public-house, wholesome recreation for the slang of the vicious music-hall and "gaff." And on this head are incidents and suggestiveness affording material enough, and to spare. Imprimis: there are the elbow-neighbours; those people who are seated here, at spare intervals, on this unpainted-deal colosseum-like gallery, for the small sum of threepence each; those people who have come gradually in, by couples, by groups, singly, to the number of two hundred perhaps; who have been able, consequently, to choose their places, and to change them, if it should seem that choice can be improved; and who clearly are not averse to the goodness of good behaviour (if the circumstances surrounding them encourage to it), since they are making themselves remarkable now for nothing except quite thorough quietness and decorum. And yet, now this fact is put down so, for recognition, that it should be a fact is remarkable in itself. For, see what these people are. They are men mostly; men in their fustian; in the grime and the grease unavoidable from their occupations, and which only months of a leisure life, and of leisure's opportunities, could effectually remove. They are men who might be engine-men, say, at any machine-maker's, or gas company, or dyer's, or cocoa-mills, or what not, in the New Cut's close vicinity. They are men who, perhaps, are van-men, forge-men,

wheelwrights, tailors, cobblers, carters. They are men just of the sort, in a word, to be sent into any house by any artificer, to do the plumbing, or the gas-fitting, or the "moving," or the snow-shovelling; and who seem so much of a type that one is scarcely distinguishable from the rest. That they are here mainly for the sake of getting four hours of tranquil shelter is the nearest to the truth, most likely, that can be surmised. Take them as they are, each one would be unable to be master of more than one room, at the best. (And such a mastery!) Many of them are probably still in that shifting condition of the unmarried workman that gives him no permanent home at all; that permits him only to under-hire half a bed near to his work, sharing it with another "chap;" that gives him no right, under the terms of such under-hiring, to the proprietorship of any corner in which he can read a book, or lounge with a "mate," or take any sort of pleasant relaxation, when his day's work is done. And let thought be given to the pathetic meaning of this; to the comfortlessness of it, the vagrancy, the want of hold; the acquaintanceship it brings with all that is reckless, and perilous, and unstable. It makes it easy to comprehend that when men and youths like those who are here can buy four hours of seemly rooftop for threepence, they are likely to buy it, thankfully; that when a place is at hand where they can have four hours of any sort of sitting for that small sum, they are likely to try to have it, thankfully, still; that when there is put within their reach delightful escape from indoor squalor (if they have an indoors) or from the listlessness and ribaldry of the street (if they are night tenants only, and custom does not allow them to apply for their rights till a certain hour), it is a boon accorded to them that is worth any amount of philanthropic heroism, and from which a splendid harvest (though it will be necessarily a late harvest) is thoroughly sure to come. And is there evidence that "The Vic," without the aid of an unrivalled transformation scene, is metamorphosed into a gigantic parlour, of the kind here supposed to be desired? That "The Vic," is a place where Sams and Tims can receive their companions? Is a haven where the one can invite the other to "come along" to, certain of accommodation and placidity? Undoubtedly. This particular couple of workmen, for instance, who are the closest

by, have not left off a murmur of confidential chat for a moment. Their hands are on the gallery-rail, their heads are on the hands, their smeared faces are turned towards each other; and they have so much of experience to exchange, or of future plans, or past disappointments, that their subdued voices—like a legato ground work—can be heard all through. A man behind, who has his wife with him, and who, with her, holds their baby turn and turn, is just as full of news and comment; only, as he deals his out to a bright woman, he naturally produces a bright, to suit. A party of workmen containing a hunchback, a little further on, full of sotto voce speech, too. So are groups of other men beyond. So are some especially tidy people with women among them, so much beyond again that they stretch to the opposite side of the curve. Behind also, but to the left, instead of to the right, there are other conversationalists though none make their conversation an offence, they keep it soft, good-manneredly and the place is too spacious for loud sounds to be disturbing. It is true that all round, and all up (turning to face the great fan-like spread of benches) there is again and again a person sitting alone; as is a lad, there; as is a second lad, three or four benches up; as are two poor work-witless-looking women who go off to sleep in company, at once; as is a tastily-dressed and superior girl (a sempstress, it is likely) who makes up for want of talk by lively and intelligent attention; as is a grey-haired man, acute and sensitive, if his features tell the truth, and judgment can be by his lighted eyes; as is another elderly man, whose rough chin sinks on to his flannel shirt-front in an instant, he putting his threepennyworth to the use (as the dazed women put it) of going straightway into a heavy snoring snooze. But these examples do not upset the sitting-room theory in the slightest. On the contrary, they help it out. For there are more ways than one of being "at home" surely and that various ways should here get illustration, even the ways of absolute vacancy and absolute enjoyment, is, from no aspect, extraordinary, or a matter of surprise.

Would an empty stage, then, do just as well at The Vic as this excellent programme that will be gone through, number by number, as soon as the curtain is drawn?

Certainly not. People must have some

thing to call them together; must have some thread on which, bead-like, they can all be methodically strung. And chatter does not imply indifference or want of perception, does it? That is, it does not mean this when, in a home soirée, it keeps up simultaneously with the piano, and when only an exceptional vocalist can enforce the attention which all true vocalists deserve. Very good. It is only bare justice then (omitting generosity) to give to the three-penny "Vic" New Cut gallery-people as much license as is appropriated by the silk and satin inhabitants of the beau monde. Besides, here is a rough plaster-sprinkled lout of a New Cutter, propelling himself down from bench to bench in the middle of a performance, with stable-like noisy hoofs. He is "hush"-ed at (and quenched into hush-ness) in a moment. Here is a second spirit—no! a second material, of a similar type. He suddenly shouts out a sentence in which "Cats" can be heard, or something more objectionable than cats, and "Order!" from several throats, is hurled at him before he has time to shout anything else; and, instantly, order comes. In connection with which these are instances, let it be marked, of the people's own preservation of their own propriety. No policeman is here, no theatre official. On this Monday night, during this Classical Concert, the people show that they have quite self-respect enough to be trusted to themselves. And as well as this inoffensiveness, or this positive display of good manners, these people show they can be touched with the charm of high-class music. Mendelssohn is played to them on the violin and the piano, in the first part of the evening, before the scenes from the opera begin, and it is played with the same admirable understanding and taste that distinguish all the selections, though there is no intention here to speak of the young artists in detail. They were students, and they gave their services; reasons that, even if criticism were desired, would make criticism out of place. Handel is sung to them, and Beethoven, and Weber, and Pauer, and Mercadante; and the beautiful quartette in *Rigoletto*, "Un dì," and the tenor, later on, sings Sullivan's *Once Again*, and the soprano sings *Buckle To*, and the bass sings *Randegger's Freshening Breeze*, with a good nautical "Hurrah;" and though these gallery-people do not know the name of what is coming, or what is going on, or what is

gone (for penny programmes are luxuries, and there are not more than two or three in all the gallery round), and though, as has been said, many of these people are talking, and some of them are asleep, yet they are stirred at some especially enjoyable solo, and cry "Encore!" to it heartily, and they show their appreciation of beautiful passages, and beautifully-executed passages, by loud applause. As is inevitable, when the opera comes, that has the greatest power to rivet attention. It is given in its proper costume of patches and powdered wigs; its comedy is marked, and all the attractiveness of the dresses, and all the fun of the story, giving something to look at in addition to something to hear, have a success that is unequivocal.

"Come along!" cries the bright woman with her baby. She says it as an interpretation of the action before her, and her interpreting is right. It is *Dorabella* being led away by her lover *Ferrando*.

"There's one poor thing fainted!" she cries again with huge enjoyment, and with the correctness of before. It is when *Fiordiligi*, told that her *Guglielmo* is ordered off to the field, drops instantly (and baggily) into a chair.

"And there's the other!" she adds in ecstasy, on *Dorabella* giving symptoms that her emotion will be exemplified to suit. "Oh dear!"

"Hey, there's tears!" laughs somebody else, when *Don Alfonso* wrings his head nearly off at the ladies' distress, and to assure them of his sympathetic agony.

And even one of the conversational neighbours with the smeared face is moved to make an interested comment. "The battle-field!" he cries. And then, overcome with the aspect of the pearl stockings, the laced coats, the pig-tails and shining buckles, and at the contrast these are to battle-fields and soldiering, as they have come to represent themselves to him, he cries, "Them blokes!" and dropping his face again upon his hands—done with it—he chuckles, "Get 'em on to a bridge, and the bridge break, and tumble 'em all into the mud! It were a lark!"

All of which, there must be the reminder again, is without the libretto (printed on the penny programme) to help. Somebody—to try the effect, possibly—buys half-a-dozen programmes, handing the copies to various of the audience near. Scarcely one is used. They are taken respectfully, because respectfully offered; but they are just held in the hand uncomprehended, with no

more reference made to them than there would be if it had been ascertained that they were printed in alien Russ, or Syriac, or Chaldee. And from the humorous side this is to be deplored, for is it not known what is the manner of the English part of a libretto? It is a manner that in "The Vic" specimen is quite well maintained. Thus: "My Fiordiligi knows not to deceive," is one specimen of it.

Heart blisses deriving,
By love's plans contriving;
Love's breath souls deriving,
Love's empire acclaim,

is another. Some of the typographical inadvertencies are "mustachois," "beseige," "unnappy." The ladies call attention to their lovers' "phizzes," declaring that they are "more than usual the very antidotes of love." They say, of their lovers themselves:

How they twist and twine!
Doubtless they will soon
Dash their heads against the ground.

They finish up with:

Ah! this is too bold a request
From a faithful and noble-minded lover;
Be in despair; be poisoned;
Go to the devil;

in the true spirit of Italian farce (in a libretto), and with true libretto-like sudden whirl from the loftiest flight to broad absurdity. And who shall say there would not be relish in this, if it could but be discerned? But study is not the object in "The Vic's" threepenny gallery. Comparisons may be odious, or melodious, either; they are not required. For what was Mozart's drift, or how far Così fan Tutti is ably translated, or offers excellent covert for ridicule, never gets entrance into anybody's mind. What is wanted up here is entertainment, is relaxation, is the unhampered opportunity to rest the very hard-worked body, the very light-worked judgment, after exasperation and worry, possibly—at any rate, after the discomfort and the effort of heavy toil. Let a translation be effected with the best literary skill, consequently, and it will do; let it be effected with the absence of any literary skill whatever, and it will do equally. There is no wish and no power to weigh which is which. And can anything—not in respect of libretti, which is an insignificant matter, but in respect of the whole scheme of entertainment put before the masses of the people—be read in this, in that fashion of reading called now universally, "between the lines?" It should be. For it is there for the reading, and in capital

letters too, if the eyes will only look for it. It is this: Since anything will do, do not give the wrong thing; keep it away, and give the right. It is this, still: Ribaldry and pollution and double entendre only obtain the applause they do obtain, because they are there to obtain it. Innocence, and the highest influences, and even sheer inanition are open to the same reception, and get the same reception, when, under the same circumstances, they are in presence, put in the other's place. There will be no guffaw with this better style, of course. The explosive, and the instant recognition accorded to an antic, a tumble, a suggestive action or an allusion certainly not oblique, is not likely to be dealt out to the grace of beautiful vocalisation, to the charm of accuracy, of picturesqueness, of the light froth of guiltless fun. Nor is this manner of recognition expected. But that there is acceptance of good things at all, that there is enjoyment of them, that good things can keep an uninstructed audience, and move an uninstructed audience, is new to caterers of amusement certainly, and is of such immense value it ought to meet with full noting. Proof comes from it that, given some sort of rhythmic and tuneful habitments, and led by this rhythm and this tune, by this music and measure, there may be a pure form underneath, and straightness and cleanness and modesty; and yet the evening will pass, and the entertainment will be given, as surely as if the trappings had bedizened something that never ought to have come. Proof comes too that henceforth the wrong of the bad thing, the poison and danger of the bad thing, will lie with those who bring it to the front. It can be torn up and hurled away, if there is the wish to tear it up and hurl it away; and in halls and concert-rooms there will be no loss of "money taken at the doors," no loss of pleasure when the money has been taken and the seats are filled. At least this is the lesson taught by an evening Up in the Gallery. This, too, is the creed, or the great underlying hope, of the committee of philanthropists who have so devotedly taken the Victoria Theatre into management. Their task has delightful pleasures, their task has weighty and unpalatable responsibilities. It is all pleasure to have so much support rendered to them by members of the artistic world, who, as philanthropic as themselves, generously give their invaluable services, knowing that the scheme

is so new and so pure it is not likely at first to "pay." It is all responsibility when, on nights that no gratuitous (and high-class) performers are available, there is obliged to be resort to the ordinary list of "professionals," who must have their fees, and who have to be seen and heard at length in rehearsal, that there may be alteration or expunging ordered of matter impossible to be allowed. Other pleasure comes from a "full house." This happens on Saturdays; the week's work being over then, the wages being in hand, and the appetite for relaxation being too sharp to be denied. On these nights, to be Up in the Gallery is to be there when every inch is crammed; when old jokes fly, such as "Soo-oop!" to the luckless supernumerary who has to smooth carpets, or carry furniture backwards and forwards to the stage. On these nights, to be Up in the Gallery is to be there when back benches are clambered on for a better view, when chat and gas bring noise and heat somewhat unbearable; but when the good that is put upon the stage meets with good approval, and there is nothing that does not show a willingness in the vast auditory to receive good to the end.

And if people who enjoy the purity of the higher stage (and of the higher literature, and the higher music; for they are all banded together), and who wish this purity to descend down and down till it reaches those who have not cultivation enough to be able to look out for purity themselves, will go, in their own persons, to see this new venture, and form their own opinion of it, they will, by their very presence, do more good than they will be able easily to understand.

WINDOWS.

For the eye is the window of the soul.

WHETHER or not the above aphorism be correct, there can be little doubt that the window is to a great extent the eye of the house. That from the colouring, the expression, the presentment, so to speak, of the window we may to a great extent form some opinion as to the disposition or the morale of the house itself.

How varied are the pictures presented to our view by a series of windows as we pass down any ordinary street!

Here is one with its neatly arranged draperies of lace; cheap, but white as soap and hand labour can make them. A small table stands squarely in front, on which is

displayed a mat of wool or lace work, with a lamp, a shell box, or a stone vase upon it. All, including the glass panes, bright, shining with the result of careful polish, and speaking eloquently of frugal care, method, and scrupulous cleanliness. Doubtless the prevailing tone of the human tenement to which the eye belongs.

What then is it which one fails to find here?

Surely it is a pleasing contrast to its neighbour, where the heavy moreen drapery on one side, drawn ungracefully across the window this sunny day of June, the lounging chair, with a thick cloak dropped upon it, the fly-specked Sunday paper and the cat reposing thereon, oblivious of dust-coated window-panes, and sill smoke-blackened, all speak of frowsiness, neglect, and sensual self-indulgence, by no means the necessary outcome of poverty.

If one felt no inclination to make acquaintance with the first, one hurries past the second repelled; more even than by the next, which is simply that of an empty house, on which all possibilities may wait.

At the fourth, the feet involuntarily linger before a pleasant picture.

A cheap linen blind, on which is painted a fanciful trellis pattern, takes the place of the lace draperies; the glass panes are shining, the top of the sash is slightly open. Upon a ledge within the window, in a homely brown jug, is a handful of wild flowers, which at this moment are removed by a pleasant-faced woman, evidently the mother of the rosy-cheeked child who is to be gratified by a view of the busy thoroughfare, with which he is probably not too intimately acquainted in play-hours. The ledge is to be utilised for the Noah's Ark, which temporarily takes the place of the flowers.

Here the eye of the house is not kept so garnished and decked for the behoof of outsiders alone. One could venture a guess that a well-balanced head-piece rules with beneficent sway within. Neither finery nor slovenliness, hard routine nor lax neglect, dominate the soul of which this window is the index.

A hunger for scientific enquiry may so far preponderate in our next picture on "the line" of survey, that the big aquarium filling up the lower sash shall compensate for the torn chintz, the cobwebby cornice, and broken flower-pot upon the sill. With no desire to pause upon the question, we

yield the benefit of the doubt and pass on.

At any rate there is little room for doubt in our next glimpse, where more than one broken pane, patched with paper, the blind torn down at the corner from its roller and pinned up from the bottom, leaves to view an uncleaned bird-cage, where its little tenant, with drooping wing, is forlornly seeking a stray seed amid the refuse on the floor of its prison, both food and drink receptacles being empty. It hardly needs the couple of beer-cans hanging conspicuously outside to complete the testimony as to the habits of the dwellers herein.

A window open wide as it will go, the bright chintz curtains drawn well back, a stand of flowering plants making a scanty screen, through which come the sounds of loud chatter and merry laughter, while hands unceasingly flying upward tell of a party of young needlewomen busy within, is far from a repelling picture, though it may not evidence largely as to prudence.

It is a contrast to the next, where, over a dingy wire blind, appear the tops of a pair of man's socks, and a pocket-handkerchief evidently hung to dry in the sun. Has some lonely bachelor his solitary cell within who is constrained to complete his personal laundry work in this primitive style.

My gallery so far is in a homely locality, and I come not unfrequently upon signs of that desire to "add to a limited income," which seems so much on the increase, to the vexing of legitimate traders.

Here is a sprawling legend: "hen Lade Eggs Hear." And, lest the intimation should appear not sufficiently explicit, upon the three or four samples of the article displayed in the saucer below, are inscribed the words, "Noo layd 2 D."

Evidently the writer is "broad" in his views, and not to be fettered by any rigid system of spelling. "You pays you's money, and you takes you's egg"—that is, if you can obtain an audience of the proprietor, which appears doubtful to the small girl who has been knocking at the door all the time we have been in view, jingling presumably the desired "2 D," without any result. One can scarcely augur much success from the business capabilities of this trader.

More promising by far is this announcement, set forth in good clerky hand, in the small parlour window which has blossomed into an amateur restaurant:

"Coffee from five in the mornings. Sausages and pies. Bread and cheese always."

Well-intentioned if vague; but the white cloth which covers the small table, and the bright tin tea-pot, and cup and saucer, are full of promise, at least of cleanliness, and a desire to make the best of small opportunities, which, if not genius, is next best to it.

Like a mourning-card, lacking only the weeping-willow and the urn, appears this small bow window, where hangs a neatly-framed printed announcement of "Needle-work done by hand." A snow-white muslin blind is drawn aside, and within sits a young widow, pale and sad-looking, clad in her new first mourning; so busily engaged upon the work she holds that the tiny child mounting on a chair to reach the window, and in evident risk of a tumble, fails to attract her notice.

It may be that the bread of the morrow for herself and child depend upon the finishing of that morsel of work.

The stone sill of the door is as white as the curtain, the very keyhole glistens in the sunshine, and a bit of climbing shrub upon the house wall is carefully trained.

As I passed the other side of the bow-window, another announcement strikes my eye, "Apartments to Let."

Is it her first venture on the sea of life alone? Let us wish her good-speed!

More auspicious-looking neighbours too one might wish her, for the chance of gaining decent lodgers.

The window adjoining is very conspicuous by reason of a huge bunch of flowers manufactured out of wire and wool and placed in a vase of white and gold, Lowther Arcadian—very.

The notes of a rattling piano, playing a galop, assert themselves confidently. From the window above leans a lad of seventeen or eighteen, who, with a hook at the end of a string, is making attempts to capture the curl-papers of a girl engaged in taking in the bread at the door; the baker being young and smiling, the transaction is prolonged.

As I turn the corner of the road, a sudden yell, shrieks of laughter, and the slamming of the door, appear to testify to the success of the fisherman.

This trim little cottage at the end of the lane has for years past presented the same aspect. Its window offers no room for speculations, either mental or physical. One word, "Geranium," suffices.

It is all that, and nothing more. The wide-spreading plant covers the entire surface of the window within. Its leaves are myriad, its blossoms countless. How nourished, how supported, I pretend not to surmise. It is there, always has been there, to all appearance always will be.

How the dwellers behind that self-assertive geranium manage for light, and air, and prospect, I know not; the plant evidently has its own way and thrives.

Now, passing from the lane, I enter upon a different order of things. Here dwell persons who, according to popular notions, can "do as they please." At any rate, it may be fairly presumed, no question of expense will stint or curb their natural taste and inclination.

Yet no less may one gain an insight into the soul within by the aspect of that window which is its eye.

Round this long French casement is gathered a whole family. The father has his large carved pipe, the mother her knitting, a couple of youngsters sit upon the balcony, fondling the one a poodle and the other a kitten. A daughter, from the table just within is handing coffee to the elders. There is a perfect concert of birds from the cages just visible among the creeping plants which shadow the balcony.

Of one thing we may be tolerably certain: they are not English-born folk who take their ease in their after-dinner hour, with such happy unconsciousness of publicity.

"Like a scene on a stage," my companion says, indicating the window we are passing. It is veiled entirely by rich lace over rose-tinted drapery. The balcony is filled with gaily-coloured flowers, which seem to close in upon the windows, excluding air and prospect. One can fancy the atmosphere within; luscious, heavy, silent, mysterious, under the eyes of day. Mayhap, beneath the glimpses of the moon life will awaken herein.

A stone verandah covered with massive ivy which trails its length along column and handrail and window-frame; a pair of globes in one window; a chess-board, with its mimic armies drawn up in array, visible in the corresponding one. These indicate very plainly the home of the Blimber-brood. And from the next, surrounded by light railing in blue and gold, set out in dainty flower-boxes arranged by the neighbouring florist, a pet spaniel and pampered menial taking the air in company, one may predicate the home of a Frou-Frou, ere yet the

glittering wings began to droop and fall to earth.

Here again the window forms but a frame to the tableau of a huge dinner-table glittering with glass and silver, the tall epergne visible alternately with the powdered heads of the big men who humbly minister to the needs of the diners.

Shall we find Mr. Veneering hereabouts? There is a reminder of that gentleman in the scene.

A grand genius must exist in some persons for shopkeeping, whose talent in window-dressing is thrown away. Such as these, who appear to have set the greater part of their costly gilded possessions forth for the public gaze—the elaborate vases, the mighty arabesque lamp, the statue of Parian, or the feather-flowers of Indian manufacture. Not unseldom have I seen a silver salver, or tankard of the same metal, set in the window, wanting but the ticket to proclaim its price.

Here is a cosy nook. A couple of trim wooden boxes fill the sills, with sober evergreens therein. A pair of parrots at one old-fashioned parlour window, a famous tabby cat dozing on its cushion in the other, a calm expressionless face peering from the side of the bright, well-dusted panes.

Below, in the trim kitchen, a chubby little maid, with sampler and song-book, and ever a spare glance for the postman or milk-boy.

One may easily realise here the tranquil refuge of the well-to-do spinster, who lives upon her means, the reliable exponent of all the doings of her neighbourhood—real or surmised.

Whole and decent, by fits and starts well polished or o'ercast with neglect; draperies of moreen which shall obtrude far into June, or of lace that preserves its unwonted aspect till November. Glimpses through the panes of cherub faces, and of heavily-bearded chins, of pretty women, and shabby dresses—with ever a background of books, and still books; of pictures, mostly unframed, and hung with little regard to unities of size and position. We all know such windows as these, and many of us love them, and do not need to guess at their owners.

Sometimes I have thought the window has more to do with our moods than we seem willing to allow, and that we pay the penalty of perverting it from its use, as when we get sand or other obstruction in the real human eye.

The task which was heavy, worked out in the corner by the coal-scuttle, the seam which appeared endless in the back attic, become abbreviated and made light in the human companionship of the highway, by the bright front window.

But avast mere purposeless gazing through the panes!

Do not let me be understood to extol the vacuous lounging at our club windows, or the spying of the gossiping spinster.

A melancholy sight presents itself to my mind as I write.

A window where incessantly are to be seen young girls, daughters of a reputable and worthy family, with whom it should seem that time "hangs heavy on their hands." Well-schooled, accomplished, full of health and youth, they stand and yawn, and lift the idle hands above the head, and gaze, and wander away to return, and each succeeds the other in dreary alternation. On a Sunday especially is the complaint at its crisis.

Alas! that when so many poor hands are throbbing in nervous haste to accomplish the task for which life is all too short, there should be so many who are wringing the dainty fingers in weariness at the slow lagging of the day, wherein nothing is "attempted," nothing "done, to earn the night's repose."

To me that window is the most pregnant with sad forebodings of them all.

TUBEROSES.

THE master's story holds the stage
Of Hamlet's studied grief and rage,
And Denmark's guilty queen;
With empty heart and weary brain,
Too tired for pleasure or for pain,
I watch the changing scene.

The curtain falls, and plaudits loud
Ring clamorous from the motley crowd,
Then talk and laughter reign;
The air is heavy with the scent
Of flowers, and happy tones are blent
With music's thrilling strain.

Across the crowd I hear the notes,
Across the crowd the incense floats
Of manifold perfumes;
Upon a velvet-cushioned seat
I see a snowy bunch and sweet,
Of white gardenia blooms.

She laid the blossoms from her hand
A moment since—I see her stand
In all her lovely grace,
No shadow on her open brow,
No memory of a broken vow
Disturbs her girlish face.

Across the crowd, myself unseen,
I watch once more the fairy queen
Of all my boyish dreams;
Once more with her I seem to roam
The wood-ways of our country home,
Or loiter by its streams.

Once more I gather for her sake
The sweet wild flowers of hedge and brake,
Once more with baby pride
She flaunts her white exotic bloom,
A tuberose heavy with perfume,
And thrusts my gift aside.

Ah me! her childhood was the type
Of what she is, as woman ripe,
She asks no wayside flower.
But cultured blossoms, rich and rare,
And all things goodly, all things fair,
And pride of place and power.

But these were never mine to give,
And how I fare, or how I live,
Claims not a care from her;
Yet looking on that face to-night,
Some ghost of ancient dead delight
Bids past emotion stir.

And to my heart I softly say:
"If fate would let thee have thy way,
What now would be thy will?
To tread the velvet path of ease,
One heart, and not the world, to please,
And she thy true love still?"

Nay, heart, there is no space for doubt,
Thy stronger better part speaks out,
And joys that it is free;
I could not bear the cloying scent
Of those white blossoms; Nature meant
A working life for me!

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

L.

WE had many discussions as to how to get there, but it was finally settled that we should go by sea—"That is if it doesna' blaw," stipulated Jennie's mamma. Jennie herself was all for the sea; it would bring back the colour to her cheeks, which had been rather paler of late than her well-wishers—of whom I count myself as among the chief—had quite liked to see. It was hard study, no doubt; the result of two or three years' high schooling and so on in London after the free open-air life of a Scotch country house. There's nothing ails the lass, but that her Uncle Jock had pronounced and had prescribed for a cure—her own native air and plenty of it.

There was considerable doubt on the Friday night as to whether the wind meant to "blaw." Jennie ran out into the garden half-a-dozen times, holding up her pretty hand to all the "airts," as she calls the points of the compass, from which the wind might be expected, and on each occasion triumphantly pronounced for a perfect calm. "Then, my sweet, it's gathering for a storm," pronounced the mother. But Uncle Jock coming in from the City—Gillies and Co., I believe, export Scotch notions to all parts of the globe—reported that the weather was perfectly serene as far as the Gulf of Mexico, and that no American disturbances had started on their pernicious errand across the Atlantic. So that it was

understood when I left them for the night, that unless for any serious disturbance of the elements we should make a start next morning in good time for the Scotch boat.

On presenting myself next morning at the Terrace with my hand-bag and bundle of rugs, I found a four-wheeled cab well-laden with feminine travelling gear, while Jennie ran out, charming in her neat homespun travelling suit, but a disconsolate pout about her bonnie mouth. "That tiresome Uncle Jock," she cried, "he must go into the City—things to sign at his office—and I'm sure, I'm sure he'll be late. Now do go after him and bring him along, for if he gets into a crack with a friend he'll not stir."

And so I find myself in a stuffy railway-carriage, instead of, as I now hoped, bowling along in a hansom with Jennie, while mamma and Uncle Jock accompanied the heavy baggage. But I found out Gillies and Co. in a stuffy alley near Eastcheap, and for Gillies and Co. I waited till within ten minutes of the time of starting, when an office-boy rushed wildly out, and darting dexterously among carts and waggons, secured a passing hansom. There was a heavy list to port when Gillies got in, but the horse staggered along gallantly under the load, as we threaded our way through the tangle of carts and waggons that were rumbling along from the docks with a whirl and din indescribable, loaded as it seemed with produce from all parts of the globe. But in one particular lane a skilful carman made the narrowest possible miss of a cannon from the massive hub of a broad-wheeled waggon to the more fragile wheel of our cab.

"I'm thankful for that," said Gillies fervently, an anxious expression that had before clouded his face now giving place to a serenely jolly one; "I'll tell you why later on." For at that moment we now pulled up alongside the wharf in a network of cabs, waggons, and porters hauling about luggage, and in the background, stretching her neck and frowning a little, Jennie on the look-out for us.

It is worth all the struggle and fume of getting on board to enjoy the sense of rest and tranquillity, and of calm superiority to those who remain on shore. Far away are London Bridge, with its stream of traffic, and the murk and mist of the great toiling city, and below is the forest of masts, with the tide seething upwards,

and fleets of barges almost shutting out the sight of the water; and just at our taffrail are the Tower guns, and a red-coat doing sentry-go solemnly up and down, while the clear-cut turrets of the Norman Keep look down upon the scene. And then the big steam-crane, which has been whirling about great bundles of barrels and cases and cans at the direction of a man in an exaggerated bow window high aloft in the gloomy pile of warehouses, takes a grip of its last load of odd trifles, and having dropped them in the hold, kindly lends a hand to swing the heavy gangway aside, while a bell clamorously announces our departure, and the first hoarse breath of the engines roars through the waste-pipe. There are all the friends of the passengers perched among bales and barrels, and generally getting into danger, and being warned and caring not a bit for the warning, but waving anything portable as a last greeting. And as long as even a tip of our funnel is visible there will be faithful creatures to stand and watch us, although all the scene is blurred with tears.

And to-day the parting with our friends is lengthened out painfully, while the engine-bell beats with the pulse of a fever-patient, for we are firmly stuck in the midst of a flotilla of barges, which threaten to carry us back with them, and squeeze us under London Bridge, instead of making our way triumphantly to the Nore.

"But we are fairly off now," at last cried Jenny, "and I am glad, for to the last minute, Uncle Jock, I feared that somebody would come and drag you off." Uncle Jock looked grave. "Well, my lassie, I'd just a presentiment myself, and I didn't feel rightly happy till we were nearly crushed by a rascally waggoner down yonder by Tower Hill." "And that made you happy, uncle," cried Jennie, laughing; "you are easily pleased, then." "Why, I'd just had two narrow escapes before," rejoined Jock. "One in the Metropolitan, when a miscreant in a train that met us, hurled a sour apple through the window, and struck me on the thorax with such force that it bounded back on the line. Now had it struck six inches higher, I doubt whether I'd not lost my sight through it." "But, uncle," interrupted Jenny, her pretty face puckered up with the effort to restrain the laughter that was brimming over in her eyes, "how do you know it was a sour apple? Perhaps it was a nice rosy-cheeked apple that some-

body wanted to make you a present of." "Aye, to be sure, Jock," said Mrs. Gillies, who, having tucked herself comfortably into a snug corner under the awning, was listening sleepily to the talk. "Aye, to be sure, Jock, you shouldn't be so uncharitable." "Nay, nay," rejoined Jock, shaking his head sturdily, "nobody would throw a sweet apple away that vicious." And then as Jennie's laughter rang out sweet and clear: "Aye, aye, you cantie things, you're always ready to laugh at the misfortunes of your elders; but listen now while I tell you about my second escape. I just slipped over to my broker, and my certies it was a slipping. I just slithered half-a-dozen yards along the wood pavement that had a moment been watered, waving my arms like a wun-mill all the time, but found my footing at the last." "I think the City would have quaked," laughed Jennie unfeelingly. But Uncle Jock shook his head and looked grave. "A man has his feelings, lassie," he rejoined, "even when he's getting old and weighty, just as well as your bits of callants." "Perhaps so," sighed Jenny as if she wasn't quite certain about it; and then she looked at her uncle in a quiet half-defiant way that made one think there was a kind of tiff between them.

It was a heavenly day, and once past Gravesend the boat lapped swiftly along over the full tide, meeting now a flight of red-sailed barges coming along—a string like a flock of wild-fowl—and now passing a convoy of yachts, their great white sails flapping idly against the masts, while they danced up and down in the long oily swell that our boat left behind it, and that caught soft gleams from the pale blue sky and white fleecy clouds. And by the time dinner was over—everybody had responded cheerfully to the dinner-bell, and Jennie, conjuring with the cherry-stones on her plate, had found the oracle declared for next year, and seemed not ill-pleased—well, when dinner was over the south shore had disappeared from sight in the soft sea haze, while we still skirted the low green coast of Essex. And now the coating of ice that had kept apart the various groups on deck began to dissolve, and Mrs. Gillies, whose coating in that line is the merest film of rime that melts at the least touch of warmth, had already made friends with two young women, not so very young either, but pleasant and well-preserved. They had shut up their little home in Kent, and were going to make a

little Highland tour. "And the two gentlemen," enquired Mrs. Gillies, alluding to their companions, who had seemed to take charge of all the business arrangements; "the two gentlemen are your brothers?" "Oh dear no," replied the elder sister with a faint flush on her cheeks, "only friends. We have met, you see." "Oh yes, I see you have met," rejoined Mrs. Gillies with a jolly laugh. "A very nice arrangement, my dear." "But I assure you there is no arrangement," protested Miss Twisdon, "no arrangement at all—only we happen to be travelling the same way."

There was a happy-looking young fellow on board who had already insinuated himself into Mrs. Gillies's good graces—from the Tape and Sealing-wax Office, I fancy, with his six weeks' leave. "There's more leisure than siller with those young fellows," pronounced Mrs. Gillies—a nice young fellow with splendid white teeth, and a mouth that would do nothing but smile; he had a friend with him, older and more sardonic, who smoked gloomily in a corner to himself. And young Smiley, as we called him from his beaming countenance, had fallen over head and ears in love with Jennie at first sight, while the young woman twirled him as it might be at the end of a string, and let him fetch and carry for her, and run about with her cloaks and belongings.

Just then we were off Harwich, the river mouth veiled in a threatening kind of haze, made up of river mists and the stale smoke of steamers, while, beyond, other little towns along the low flat coast showed against a strip of bright sky; everything quite calm and still except for the pother made by our own boat, the rattle of the screw, and the gruff voice of the engine. And then we heard a kind of wheezing droning sound from forwards, followed by a shrill vibrating note. "Why, man, there's the piper on board!" cried Uncle Jock, springing to his feet and making his way to the bows.

And sure enough there was the piper, and not a common piper either, but Donald the piper of the Scots Guards, with his six feet of sturdy manhood, his handsome Highland face, the brows compressed in the deep Highland frown as he stalks grandly up and down the deck, sounding the shrill pibroch of all the clans. Donald with the tartan trews, with the smart blue regimental jacket and silver buttons, with buckles to his shoes, and a silver badge in his Glengarry, and tartan silk ribbons streaming

from the ivory-jointed pipes. Half-a-dozen Scots Guardsmen are scattered about the deck in the easiest of undress, and a grizzled old salt of the Highland type, with a shock of rusty hair under his bonnet and bushy eyebrows, aye, as bushy as many a southern man's whiskers, and a patriarchal beard that streams from him in all directions in the light breeze. The grizzled salt, reclining on the anchor-stock, sways body and limbs and head ecstatically to the rhythm of the pipes.

And then Donald changes his strain with a touch overhead at the long pipes with the streamers, and a general squeaming and squirling, and presently bursts into a blithe Scotch reel. At that one of the youngest and Scotchiest of the Guards—who has been quietly snoozing, stretched out at full length in his shirt-sleeves, with his martial cloak for a pillow, and one shoe on his foot while the other is resting negligently in the scuppers—opens his eyes, comes to a sitting posture, listens for a moment, and then kicking off his other shoe, springs to his feet, and standing for a moment with his head cocked on one side waiting for the spring of the tune, dashes next moment into a dance. And deftly he foots it, twirling about among the knobs and links and hold-fasts that make this forward deck a very pitfall to the unwary, twirls among them all with the true savage abandon, and as he whirls his arms about and snaps his fingers, the old salt gives a "Hech!" from the very bottom of his heart, and his feet seem irresistibly twitched from the ground. Even Uncle Jock is on wires. "Aye, if I were a lad now to take a spring with them," he mutters, and Jennie, who has just come up with the faithful Smiley in attendance, gazes on the scene with amused enthusiasm in the dilated pupils of her soft grey eyes.

In the midst of his delight Uncle Jock gives a start and growls softly to himself, and I see that his eyes are fixed upon a young fellow, a fine handsome young fellow, in heather-coloured suit, with brown gaiters and thick walking boots, who has hitherto been reclining with his head pillowed on the big shank of the best bower, but who has now drawn out a block, and with facile touches is making a rapid sketch of the piper and of him who dances to the piping. Jennie saw him too. She turned and reddened like a rose, "syne pale like ony lily."

Aye, the secret is out now. I see the cause of the pale cheeks, of the soft far-

away look in the eyes. I see, too, why Jennie set her mind so upon the sea-voyage, all that weighing of the wind and restless impatience to be off, and the friendly kind of soreness between her and Uncle Jock. For Jock is the obstacle, of course. The kind-hearted mother would get the moon for her daughter if she could, rather than she should wet her eyes. But Uncle Jock is made of sterner stuff, and I doubt there would be poor housekeeping for them if it were not for Gillies and Co. in the City.

Well, Jennie disappears, with Smiley like a shadow in her wake. He is but a shadow to her, poor thing. And Uncle Jock, after a moment's hesitation, walks up to the young artist and offers his hand.

"Well, Ronald, how are you going on since we parted?"

"Oh, well enough," replies Ronald coldly, but with heightened colour.

"Aye," resumed Uncle Jock after an awkward pause. The dance had ceased, and the piper, with more adjustment of his pipes and shaking out of his streamers, had burst into a mournful lament, with much moaning and crooning. The sea and sky, too, had turned grey, and a chilly air had sprung up from the north. "Aye," said Uncle Jock, "you'll be going north like the rest of us, I expect?"

"Well, yes, it looks like it," rejoined the young man coldly. And with that they parted, and Jock and I went aft.

"To think of his father's son," muttered Jock, "lying there in the steerage like any common seaman! But I'm not pleased with Jennie. She must have known."

"I didn't know, uncle," rejoined Jennie indignantly. "But I expect he did," with a touch of pride in her voice, as if to say that she could trust her laddie to follow her wherever she went.

As darkness came on, lights began to twinkle from the shore—a long row of them—which was Yarmouth, with other lights, as it might be from a town afloat, while ships' bells tinkled faintly in the distance, and then Cromer, perched upon its low cliff, where are the best boatmen on the coast, says one, there being always rough landing there. And from headland and point shine out the lights and beacons—revolving lights, and intermittent lights, and flashing lights. There should be a moon, but it is veiled in clouds, and a soft half-darkness steals over the scene, out of

which now and then appears a vision of a dark phantom-ship in full sail, that shows an angry red light and disappears.

It is strange, with all the air there is at sea, that it never manages to get down into the cabins, where reigns always that stuffy smell, composed principally of whisky and waterproof, so trying to people who are not inured to it. But the freshness of a morning on deck is a compensation, although it is now grey and thick, the fog-horn booming ominously every now and then, while other sea-tritons respond from the formless void about us. But by break-fast-time it begins to clear, with glimpses of jolly sunshine and a long line of white chalk cliffs that break now and again through the haze. We have crossed in the night the big gap in the coast, giving a wide berth to The Wash and the treacherous Humber mouth, and this is the Yorkshire coast, with Bridlington to be seen—just the gleam of the roofs—snugly squatted in its sheltered bay. Bridlington, noted for a sea-fight with Paul Jones, the American privateer, and where the fair light-minded queen of Charles the Doomed landed to begin the civil war, with arms and stores to purchase which she had pawned the Crown jewels in Holland.

By breakfast-time Scarborough is in sight; the scour, or headland, standing out boldly among the surrounding cliffs, with its ruined castle, where many a stout tussle has been fought, and the white tents of a volunteer camp under its walls. And then a wild iron-bound coast, and perched on the highest cliff a windmill, suggesting an upper land where there are cornfields and homesteads far above sea level. A fine crevice in the wall of cliffs is Whitby, with a long pier, and houses snugly clustered under the cliffs, while above the gaunt walls of a ruined abbey show the sky through their broken traceries, while a more modern castle-tower is a ruin too, all deserted and forlorn. And then we lose sight of land again. It is quite calm, with hardly a breath of wind, and the smoke of the steamers constantly passing has formed a continuous cloud, which stretches, no doubt, from the mouth of the Thames to that of the Tyne.

We are all rather quiet and subdued this morning, Jennie especially. She has had a long walk with Ronald on the forward deck, and Uncle Jock is very cross about it. "I'll pay his cabin fare for him," suggests Jock sarcastically, "that he may come and talk to you more comfortably."

But I don't think he would venture to propose such a thing to Ronald, who is brimful of pride, I fancy. And so the day passes quietly on, without even a blast from the piper. Someone—Smiley, I think—suggesting such a thing, is met indignantly by the grizzled old salt: "Dinna ye mind it's the Sawbith?" "But don't you have sacred music on the pipes?" asks Smiley, still beaming. "Na, na; they're just for fighting, and dancing, and courting; they're no fit for the Sawbith," pronounces the Scot.

Coquet Island now stands out in the soft misty light, with a fine sea-mark in the way of a church-tower, and then a grand line of coast, with a ruined castle frowning from the heights, and presently, as a dim speck, as the land trends away from our course, the tiny holy island where stern, woman-hating St. Cuthbert spent years of a solitary life in fasting and prayer.

And here, at six p.m., is auld Scotia's rugged frontier, with a windy-looking mountain looking out upon us, a white nightcap of clouds on the highest peak. To northwards a greyish gloom has overspread the horizon with inky patches here and there, the sea and sky meeting in a line of lurid light, and then a heavy down-pour. And thus, having relieved its mind somewhat, the weather clears a little, with patches of pale steely blue. We are quite close to the shore now, with green fields and brown, white cottages, and dark ravines, with rigid lines of cliffs that might have been chipped so with a giant chisel, and stern-looking hills with lines of firs—Scotch firs, of course—on the ridges; and then comes St. Abb's Head, cold and grim, and a gloomy coast, where Fast Castle frowns among precipitous rocks, such as Scott has pictured in his *Wolf's Crag* of *The Bride of Lammermoor*; and then gloomy Dunbar, with the grim heights behind it—fit scene for one of Cromwell's stern victories.

And now in full view, right in our track, like some sea-monster's head rising abruptly from the waves, is the famed Bass Rock, and Tantallon is on the coast to the left—the Tantallon Castle of Marmion.

Three gigantic hummocks seem to guard the entrance to the Firth of Forth, seen in this dim light; one far out at sea, the Bass Rock, while another is North Berwick Law, rising just behind the little watering-place of that name. The scene is of gloomy grandeur, the waters almost black, the far-away dying light with cold pink touches

here and there in the northern sky. The open sea stretches away, far, far away to the land of the Northmen, to the dim arctic regions, the land of night beyond. We are passing just under the Bass Rock, now glowing in the last lurid rays of the setting sun. An awful scene that line of sheer precipice rising out of the sea for three hundred feet or more, every jutting coign and corner white with sea-birds and their nests, throwing out the awful blackness of the cliffs; deep gloomy caverns open out near the water's edge, where the fretting sea has caused an indelible tide-mark on the rocky wall. Where the rock slopes downwards to the sea, covered with turf of a dark and yet glowing green, are the lines of an early fortress built of the red sandstone rock that crops out on this side.

As the hoarse beat of our engines reverberates from the rocks, thousands of sea-birds are on the wing; there is a feeling of commotion, but not a sound is to be heard unless it is the chirping of the fledglings on the heights above, that dart about here and there, flourishing their wings in great alarm.

And then all of a sudden, as if repenting of its inhospitable gloom, a light breaks over land and sea, a bright afterglow of the sunset, that tinges all the throbbing sea and gives a touch of grace to the rugged Bass and to the wide-stretching shores; and in this welcoming glow we pass fairly into the arms of the Forth. And now we sight the lighthouse on the island of Inchkeith—a dark mass lying in our track—and presently long lines of lights twinkle over the waters. A rocket rises in the air, another, tinging the darkness with a fiery glow; it is our signal to the people in the harbour, and presently we glide softly between the piers, and with great shouting and heaving of huge ropes are laid quietly alongside. And then a hurried journey of twenty minutes by train, and we are settled in our hotel in Edinburgh, the dark mass of the castle rising on one hand, and Arthur's Seat glowering over the town on the other, with a dark mass of houses between from which lights gleam quietly here and there.

A CAT'S-PAW.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II. THE CAT'S-PAW.

MRS. ARMYTAGE'S lodgings consisted of the bow-windowed drawing-room floor of a house exactly opposite Mr. Mitford's, and she and Millicent Orme met every day for

the walks and talks that are so dear to young-lady friendship. The pretty widow passed a good deal of time in writing, and always posted her letters herself. This done, she was at leisure, and though she frequently lamented the delay in the arrival of her friend Mrs. Temple, she seemed to like her quarters very well. She also lamented the delay in the arrival from India of some papers which were essential to the clearing-up of the matters about which she was consulting Mr. Mitford. She was not altogether so cheerful when she was alone as she showed herself in the little society of friends; she gave way to a good deal of impatience then, and strange to say, the object of her most irritable remarks, made to herself, was Mr. Mitford. Her flirtation with Frederick was progressing as favourably as she could have desired if she had been in earnest about it.

The dangerous delights of lawn-tennis, the perils of evening walks, and the seductions of musical teas had each and all done their worst for poor Frederick Orme. He presented to all eyes, except those of his uncle's, before whom he took thoroughly good care not to betray himself, the supremely ridiculous spectacle of a very young man helplessly in love with a woman older than himself, and versed in the ways of a world of which he knows nothing.

Mrs. Armytage was very ingenious in devising experiments of a graceful kind upon the submission of her slaves, which did not hurt the pride of the subjugated, or render them ridiculous; her methods were like those of the cotillon of the imperial régime as applied to the game of forfeits. Frederick Orme was her favourite "subject," and she had every reason to be pleased with the success of her experiments in his case, for he had responded to them with a dog-like obedience.

"I wonder what your silly brother takes that woman's age to be?" said Millicent's curate, who could not bear Mrs. Armytage. "She's thirty, you know, at the least."

"Thirty! What can you be thinking of? She is not twenty-four—she told me so herself, and Fred is two-and-twenty," replied the loyal Millicent, armed with unusual boldness on her friend's behalf.

"Ah well, it does not matter," rejoined the curate, "for she is only making a fool of him anyhow."

And then the reverend gentleman turned the conversation to more personally interesting matters, entertaining a sound conviction that to begin with, Mrs. Armytage

had found a fool ready made in his brother-in-law elect.

Whatever the pretty widow had in her mind respecting Frederick Orme, it certainly was not marrying him, and she began to be aware that it would be awkward for her if he, fortified by his natural conceit and all the encouragement which their present relation conveyed, were to propose to her. She did not feel confident that she should be able to "keep it off" much longer, and for some hidden reason her irritation against Mr. Mitford, disguised under an almost caressing amiability, increased daily. Mrs. Armytage was of a decidedly inquisitive turn of mind; she liked to see all there was to be seen, and early in their acquaintance she had made Frederick take her into Mr. Mitford's second room, and show her the lower office. She had ascended the little staircase, examined the shelves that lined the railed gallery on one side of the clerks' room, learned the trick of the lock of the private door which gave admittance to the upper rooms, and declared to her guide in this surreptitious visit (which she assured Frederick she would not, for his sake, divulge even to Millicent), that she had not previously believed there could be so many law-papers in one office as must be contained in all those wonderful boxes. Frederick smiled as he informed her they had a lot more stored away.

"Elvesden Mine, Twynham Colliery, Croft Estate—that means Mr. Mallison's affairs, I suppose," said the pretty widow, fluttering airily before the iron shelves. "And, of course, it is full up to the very top."

She tapped it lightly with her taper fingers and made a pretence of lifting the lid.

"Don't know, I'm sure," said Frederick. "The governor keeps all the Mallison business in his own hands."

"What does the tidy little number, at the left corner of every box mean?"

"That's a guide to the key. The governor is the soul of method; each key has a number on a little ivory label, and they are all kept in the safe; there's a special rack for them."

"Indeed. Well, I've seen all there is to be seen, I think, and I am glad I shall not have to pass the best part of my life in a lawyer's office."

The next day Mrs. Armytage called, in business hours, and had an interview with Mr. Mitford. This was the first occasion

on which the lawyer detected any silliness about his client, but he could not but think the request she came to prefer rather a weak one. It was that he would lock up in his iron safe a box of trinkets for whose safety she had suddenly become alarmed. He consented kindly, but he laughed at her in a benign way, said no one ever lost anything in Bassett by household or other thieves, and added that she must not take it into her head to want the box at unreasonable hours. She threw a touching look of sad and gentle reproach into her dark eyes as she said:

"Dear Mr. Mitford, you forget my mourning-dress!" The worthy lawyer felt positively ashamed of himself.

"Pray forgive me," he said. "I did forget for a moment. Now give me this precious deposit; I promise you it shall be perfectly secure."

Here Mrs. Armytage again suggested to Mr. Mitford the possibility of her being only a silly woman, after all, for she said, in her childlike and bewitching way:

"Oh, do let me put the box into the safe with my own hands. I never saw the inside of an iron safe in my life; I suppose it's full of gold and silver."

Mr. Mitford laughed, unlocked the safe—the mechanism of the lock delighted her, it was so clever, she said, so infallible—displayed the neatly-arranged contents—she was surprised there was so little money—and told her she might choose a spot for her trinket-box. She hesitated prettily, laid it on the central shelf, removed it to the upper one, and finally placed it well back in a corner, laughingly remarking that her arm could hardly reach so far. Then she clapped her hands gleefully, and said:

"Lock it up, lock it up; I'm sure you won't want to open it any more to-day. Do let me see the great lock work so easily."

As Mr. Mitford closed the safe a knock at the door announced a fresh claimant for his attention. Mrs. Armytage promptly and gracefully withdrew.

The long summer day was drawing in; the pleasant Saturday afternoon had seen the young people of Bassett of all sorts and conditions out enjoying themselves, and the new tennis-lawn at The Croft presented a pretty spectacle, occupied by the devotees of the game and the favoured onlookers.

A tea-party, given by Mrs. Orme, at which the curate was expected to assist, was to wind up the day. Mrs. Armytage

was among the lookers-on. She did not like exertion, and she knew that to play tennis would be becoming neither to herself nor to her widow's weeds; but she did the business of spectator very gracefully. Besides this she contrived to keep Frederick Orme from making her and himself undesirably conspicuous by his devotion, while she gave him encouragement in the feeling from which that devotion sprang, with cleverness that a practitioner in the fine-art of coquetry on a much less obscure stage might have envied. She looked very handsome and animated; but yet Millicent Orme, who, if not the wisest of girls, was quick to observe in the case of any one for whom she cared, had wondered more than once, when for the moment neither the game nor the curate absorbed her wholly, whether anything was wrong with "Minnie." (They had got to christian-names by this time.) She had occasional fits of absence and there was a feverish fretfulness about her gaiety. Millicent had asked her friend whether anything ailed her, and had been told not to mind, that it was only a headache. But the headache did not go off, and a full hour before any one else thought of leaving the tennis-ground Mrs. Armytage asked Frederick Orme if he would "mind" taking her back to Bassett, as she felt "quite ill."

"Mind!" Well, there is no need to dwell upon Frederick's feelings. Mr. Guppy has expressed them in the immortal saying, "There are chords."

"Let us slip quietly away," whispered Mrs. Armytage. "No one will notice us, and an hour's rest before tea will set me all right."

They slipped away, and walked slowly towards the town. Mrs. Armytage did not try to talk, and once or twice she shivered perceptibly. Her companion was all attention and solicitude; but she assured him there was no need for anxiety, and he acknowledged admiringly that among her good qualities that of not making a fuss about herself ranked high. He was by no means reticent; on the contrary, he made undeniable love to her; but Mrs. Armytage did not seem to object. Indeed, she scarcely heeded him.

Frederick's vanity would have been terribly tried by her manner if it had not been for that palliating headache, and the cheering remembrance that although every other man of the party at The Croft would have been as ready to act as her escort as he was, she had chosen him.

"Do you know," she said, when they were within a few yards of Mr. Mitford's house, "I think I will ask you to take me to your mother's house. I don't feel equal to climbing the stairs to my own rooms. I will sit for a while in the hall, and you need not let any one know. You have a latch-key?"

Frederick did possess that badge of liberty, and he opened the street-door and admitted his fair companion, who was now pale and slightly breathless, into the hall. He placed her in a chair and begged her to let him summon his mother. But she would not hear of this.

"Not on any account," she said earnestly. "You know how nervous and easily upset she is. I will not remain here, lest she should come down and get a start. Is there anybody in the lower office?"

"No one; the room is quite empty."

"Then I will go in there." She rose, and leaned heavily upon his arm. "The coolness and quiet will do me good."

Frederick took her into the clerk's room, and she seated herself close to the short staircase, leaning her head wearily against the wall. He looked at her uneasily; her hurried breathing and varying colour disturbed him; his usual volubility was checked. He stood by her, looking very uncomfortable, and fervently wishing that some one would come that way.

At length Mrs. Armytage, laying her right hand upon his arm, said with a look whose efficacy she had often tested:

"Dear Mr. Orme, I fear I am very troublesome, but you will forgive me. The truth is, I do not feel better, and I am afraid one of my troublesome fainting-fits is coming on. No, no; don't call any one, I beg. I am accustomed to dealing with them. I know what to do"—all this in gasps and with fluttering eyelids—"if you would be so kind as to get me the only thing that stops them."

"Certainly. What is it? Wine—brandy?"

"No, no; it is a medicine. Some drops prescribed for me by a doctor. I have been subject to these attacks. Here is the key of my dressing-case," she added, detaching a small gilt key from her watch-chain. "If you will take this to my maid she will give you the bottle."

"But I cannot leave you; I must call some one."

"Pray don't," she said earnestly. "I know the best way to treat myself. If you

will do exactly as I ask you I shall be all right. The bottle is under the first tray of my dressing-case."

Frederick obeyed her, and his last glance showed him her white face and closed eyelids as she leaned her head patiently against the wall and folded her hands in her lap. In another minute he had crossed the street and knocked at the hall-door opposite. He was not admitted until he repeated the summons with some vigour and impatience, and then he met with an unexpected difficulty. Mrs. Armytage's maid was called down, but she proved to be a Frenchwoman, and Frederick Orme could not speak French. He resorted to pantomime; he pointed to Mr. Mitford's house, and said madame was there; he imitated the action of drinking out of an imaginary bottle. During this performance the staid person who had opened the door to him regarded him with amazement, probably under the impression that he had gone suddenly mad. The French maid was bewildered, and shook her head and her hands protestingly. Finally Frederick held up the gilt key in one hand and pointed to the stairs with the other. The French maid had a glimmering of comprehension, and as he mounted the stairs unhesitatingly, she followed him into her mistress's sitting-room. Frederick looked round, saw a box with ormolu edges on a table, and proceeded to fit the key to it; but the maid shook her head, disappeared through the folding-doors which communicated with the adjoining room, and returned with the dressing-box. Frederick handed the key to her, and she unlocked the box, wondering at this odd proceeding, but supposing Mrs. Armytage had taken a fancy to wear some ornament, and been too indolent to come and fetch it herself. But when Mr. Orme raised the tray, and was evidently searching for something, she was completely puzzled. There was no bottle of drops in the box.

"Confound it! What shall I do?" muttered Frederick. "She has put it somewhere else, and this fool of a Frenchwoman does not understand me. Hi!" Here he roared at the startled alien as if she were deaf and perversely stupid. "Bot-tel, vous sav-vy; like this, but pet-ty," and he took up a scent-bottle to illustrate his meaning.

The maid thought for a moment, touched her forehead with a finger, exclaimed, "Tiens! j'y suis!" darted through the doorway again, and returning, handed

Frederick a bottle which she took from the mantelpiece in the bedroom.

Frederick Orme looked at the label, saw that it was inscribed "Drops, to be taken occasionally," ran downstairs, opened the door for himself, and hurried across the street. His absence had lasted at least ten minutes; what had happened in the interval? Should he find Mrs. Armytage in a dead faint on the floor? His latch-key again admitted him. An instant took him to the door of the lower office, but to his surprise the door did not yield to his hand; it was locked on the inside! What did this mean? He shook the handle and called to Mrs. Armytage, but there was no sound for a minute; the next he heard steps on the floor, the lock was shot back, and Mrs. Armytage stood before him.

"What did you lock the door for?" were his first words.

"Because I was afraid some one might come in, and I did not wish anybody but you to be aware of my foolish trick of faintness. Oh, thank you; that is all right."

She resumed her seat, and smiled up at him bewitchingly. She was still deadly pale, and her lips quivered, but her eyes were very bright.

"There's a water-bottle and glass on the bureau over there. Will you drop ten drops very carefully, please? I hardly require them, but as you have got them for me I will take them."

He did as she told him, and as drop after drop fell from the rim of the bottle under his intent gaze, Mrs. Armytage's bright eyes fixed themselves upon him unseen, with a look of keen enquiry and suspense, which withdrew itself when the tale was completed, and changed to one of her customary "finishers" as with languid grace she took the glass from his hand and drank its contents.

The medicine did its work. In a few minutes Mrs. Armytage was quite well; her beautiful colour was restored, and she was more vivacious, more fascinating, and, especially, more willing to receive the homage of her juvenile adorer, than ever. But she suddenly remembered the flight of time, and declared that she must go home. She should only just have time to change her dress and come back for Millicent's "tea." She was so glad no one had seen her, and Mr. Orme must never, never reveal this silly performance of hers to anybody. He was to be on his honour about that. No, he was not to cross the street with her.

The little party assembled, and the mild festivity was a success in the opinion of everybody present except Frederick Orme, who was bored to death, and as sulky as the typical bear, for Mrs. Armytage did not make her appearance. A dainty little note of apology reached Millicent just as she had begun to wonder what was detaining her friend, and Frederick had to console himself as well as he could with the message: "My very best thanks to your brother."

Of course he called before business hours next morning to enquire for Mrs. Armytage, and learning that she was much better, beguiled the tedium of his morning's work by hopes of seeing her in the evening. He had not, however, to wait so long. A little before mid-day, Frederick, looking drearily over the top of the wire blind that covered the lower half of the office window on the monotony of Main Street, beheld the object of his affections stepping daintily across the dusty thoroughfare. He had barely time to withdraw from his post of observation, and fly to the hall door, before Mrs. Armytage reached it, and with his first glance at her there came apprehension. Something had happened. What was it? Mrs. Armytage was not ill; never had she looked more radiantly lovely, for there was sadness in her face, and a tender sweet solicitude. Nevertheless, an instantaneous conviction of evil struck to the heart of the foolish but loyal and single-hearted young donkey. She did not give him time to question her, but said at once:

"Mr. Orme, I have had bad news. The silence of my friend Mrs. Temple is explained; she is dangerously ill in London, and alone. I must go to her at once; I leave Bassett in an hour, hoping to return very shortly, and keeping on my rooms, of course. But I must see Mr. Mitford, if possible; I have to ask him a question. Is he disengaged, and can he see me?"

She said all this rapidly, and in so purposeful a tone, that Frederick was constrained to reply that his uncle was disengaged and could see Mrs. Armytage, and that he (Frederick) was awfully sorry for her bad news.

"Let me see Mr. Mitford at once," said Mrs. Armytage; "I'll come and say good-bye afterwards to Millicent, and—and—you."

"Good-bye?" He stood hesitating between the hall-door and that of the office. "But not for always?"

"For always? Nonsense, not even for long. But pray let me see Mr. Mitford."

Frederick took her at once to his uncle's room. Mr. Mitford received his fair client with politeness, and listened to her statement of her unpleasant position and her obligation to leave Bassett at once. He was not very sorry; he had had enough of the vague confidences of this pretty widow, rumours had reached him that his nephew was making a fool of himself about the lady (clearly a work of supererogation), and he had been visited of late by doubts as to whether his own conduct with regard to her had been distinguished by wisdom. On the whole he was glad of a break in the intimacy that had come about so unaccountably. He was additionally gracious, perhaps, by reason of that very feeling, and when Mrs. Armytage begged him not to triumph over her because of the fulfilment of his prophecy about the brief tenancy of his iron safe by her trinkets, he did not feel disposed to disoblige her. He made no comment at all upon the transaction, indeed, but simply took out his keys and unlocked the safe. Mrs. Armytage rose and stood by his side.

"There's the box," said Mr. Mitford; "take it out yourself."

Mrs. Armytage stretched her arm into the safe, but she averted her head from it, and poured a whole broadside from her eyes into Mr. Mitford's as she withdrew the box from its hiding-place, jingling it against the key-rack.

Frederick Orme was in waiting when she left Mr. Mitford, and never had he hated the restraints of business so much as now, when they hindered him from devoting himself to the lady of his love. But she strengthened and consoled him by her whispered "Never mind, we must bear it for the present; it will not be for long," and he parted from her, being permitted to kiss her fair hands, at the door of his mother's drawing-room, with great fortitude. Millicent was happier than he, for she accompanied Mrs. Armytage and her maid to the station, and the friends parted with a reciprocal promise of regular correspondence.

Days, melting into weeks, passed by, and no letter from Mrs. Armytage reached Millicent Orme, who was surprised at the end of the third week to observe that a bill of "Apartments to Let" was put on the rooms formerly occupied by Mrs.

Armytage. She enquired of the owner of the house, and learned that the pretty widow had paid a month's rent in full, and told her landlady that the rooms might be let at the end of her term. This was inconsistent with the unhesitating assurance which Mrs. Armytage had given to Millicent and her brother of her intention to return to Bassett. Time passed, and the fascinating stranger was almost forgotten. Even in a quiet country town people's own interests are too engrossing for long memories. Millicent was going to be married to the curate, and he was by no means sorry to believe that she had seen the last of Mrs. Armytage. Frederick was still dismal and sullen, but fate might send a new face in his way, and then he too would be none the worse for that brief apparition.

The autumn tints were all abroad when Mr. Mitford received intelligence seriously affecting his friend and client, Mr. Mallison of The Croft. His sister, contrary to all the laws made and provided, invaded his business precincts to question him about it.

"Henry," she said, "is it true? Is Mr. Mallison dead?"

"Not Mr. Walter Mallison," he answered. "I am happy to say that is not true, though I believe it was reported last night. Laurence Mallison is dead. He died a few days ago at Monte Carlo, in a state of destitution, having lost everything at the tables. Some English people there paid his funeral expenses."

"Poor fellow! And what will become of his wife now?"

"I really cannot say," answered Mr. Mitford dryly.

He had told his sister even so much reluctantly, and only because he desired to correct her unjust estimate of the two brothers. Mrs. Orme withdrew, leaving her brother to write to Mr. Mallison, from whom he had heard by the last mail from Melbourne. The letter was a brief one, merely announcing the arrival of the writer after a favourable voyage, and that he was wonderfully better.

That day was a memorable one in Mr. Mitford's office. He had occasion to refer to a paper contained in the box marked "The Croft Estate," and in doing so, he discovered that the will executed at Naples by Mr. Mallison was missing. He was certain that he had placed it in the box; the key hung in its place on the neat little rack in the safe. He searched the safe to make sure, though he felt it

was useless. All in vain; the will was gone. How? That was the question, and there was no answer to it. The frightened clerks were strictly examined by Mr. Mitford, but their innocence and ignorance were equally evident and complete. They were enjoined to keep the matter strictly secret, and Mr. Mitford found himself obliged to add to the communication of Laurence Mallison's death to his client an admission of the mysterious disappearance of the will. If Walter had died instead of Laurence, what a position Mr. Mitford would have found himself in! The will gone, and the brother whom it disinherited heir-at-law! Never before had Mr. Mitford felt so uncomfortable, so thoroughly perplexed as he felt in the interval between this discovery and the arrival of the next mail from Melbourne. He communicated with the persons at Monte Carlo from whom he had heard, and made enquiries about the widow of his client's brother; but he was informed that Laurence had arrived at Monte Carlo alone, and nothing had been heard of his wife. She made no claim, she made no sign, unless, indeed, she had appealed to Mr. Mallison, and of that Mr. Mitford could know nothing.

The next mail brought a letter from his distant client which gave Mr. Mitford heartfelt pleasure. It announced Mr. Mallison's speedy return to England under most unexpected circumstances. A day or two after his arrival at Melbourne he had met the lady of his former love. The pretty and persuasive Miss Burgess of those days had been a widow for two years, and he had very soon perceived that he might venture to assure her that he had not forgotten the past. His health was in a fair way of restoration, they were to be married the day after that on which he was writing, and would come to England in a short time. After all these wonders came the following sentence: "My will is, of course, useless now, and I shall not lose any time in making another, immediately after my marriage. It will be a simple matter, everything to go to my wife. The will shall be forwarded to you."

Mr. Mitford drew a long breath of relief and profound satisfaction.

Millicent Orme's wedding had taken place, and Mr. and Mrs. Mallison had arrived at The Croft. The exceptionally mild weather, and the great improvement in his health, enabled Mr. Mallison to

contemplate remaining there, although it was now winter, at least for some time. The quiet, staid, handsome lady whom he had married was generally approved of, and all things were satisfactory. Frederick Orme had fallen in love with a sister of his clerical brother-in-law, a blue-eyed cherry-lipped lassie who had come to Bassett in the capacity of bridesmaid to Millicent, and who had given him to understand that she could not bear idlers, dawdlers, or flute-players. He hardly ever gave a thought to the velvety dark orbs and languid graces of that inexplicable Mrs. Armytage.

A long conversation between Mr. Mallison and Mr. Mitford, at the office of the latter, had thrown no light whatever upon the mystery of the missing will. They had given it up as an unreadable riddle, and passed on to the subject of Laurence Mallison's death. Mr. Mallison thanked Mr. Mitford very heartily for all he had done in the matter, and enquired whether anything had been heard of the unfortunate man's widow. Mr. Mitford answered in the negative, and then said that a small packet containing a few articles of Laurence Mallison's property had been sent to him by the kindness of one of the English ladies at Monte Carlo. He had not opened the packet, and now wished to hand it over to Mr. Mallison. Very gravely, if not sorrowfully, the brother of the dead man broke the seal, and turned over the few things contained in a slight wooden box of the kind in which cut flowers from the Riviera are sent through the post. There was an empty purse, a shabby note-case with a few visiting cards, some letters in a woman's handwriting, a cigar-case, two finger-rings, a watch-chain with a locket attached to the short end—but no watch. Mr. Mallison opened the locket, and after he had looked for a minute or two at the miniature set in it, he said to Mr. Mitford, who was standing at the window, with his back turned to him:

"Well, well, I suppose there was some excuse for him. This is his wife's portrait, of course. Look at it; the face is not

only beautiful, but singularly candid and refined."

He put the locket into Mr. Mitford's hand, and that gentleman, gazing at it with distended eyes, exclaimed:

"This your brother's wife! Why, it's Mrs. Armytage!"

"It's plain enough," said Mr. Mallison sadly, when he and Mr. Mitford had gone over all the circumstances they could put together. "They never faced the possibility of my recovery; I was believed to be in a hopeless state when I started. They calculated on what they hoped for—that the first news of me would be the news of my death. It was tremendously audacious; but I believe she is a woman capable of anything; this must have been entirely her plan."

"But," objected Mr. Mitford, "if you had died, and your brother had claimed the property and got it, she would have been recognised and found out at once."

"She would never have come near the place. What more simple than to sell The Croft?"

"True, true. There still remains the question, how did she do it?"

"That had better remain a mystery, Mitford. Let us leave it there. She found a cat's-paw, no doubt."

Mr. Mitford started.

"By Jove, so she did!" said he, as a remembrance of the incident of the safe and the trinket-box flashed across his mind, "and it was I, myself, who acted in that capacity." Then he related the circumstances. Mr. Mallison, amid all the pain of the incident, could not resist a smile.

"Very clever," he said. "Ah, what a pity! I will put these things of his out of sight and out of mind. Never mind about the cat's-paw—the chestnuts are safe."

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XVII. MR. GREY DINES AT HOME.

MR. GREY returned home in a cab on the day of Mr. Tyrrwhit's visit, not in the happiest humour. Though he had got the best of Mr. Tyrrwhit in the conversation, still, the meeting, which had been protracted, had annoyed him. Mr. Tyrrwhit had made accusations against himself personally which he knew to be false, but which, having been covered up, and not expressed exactly, he had been unable to refute. A man shall tell you you are a thief and a scoundrel in such a manner as to make it impossible for you to take him by the throat. "You, of course, are not a thief and a scoundrel," he shall say to you, but shall say it in such a tone of voice as to make you understand that he conceives you to be both. We all know the parliamentary mode of giving an opponent the lie so as to make it impossible that the Speaker shall interfere. Mr. Tyrrwhit had treated Mr. Grey in the same fashion, and as Mr. Grey was irritable, thin-skinned, and irascible, and as he would brood over things of which it was quite unnecessary that a lawyer should take any cognisance, he went back home an unhappy man. Indeed, the whole Scarborough affair had been from first to last a great trouble to him. The work which he was now performing could not, he imagined, be put into his bill. To that he was supremely indifferent, but his younger partner thought it a little hard that all the other work of the firm should be thrown on his shoulders during the period which naturally would have been his holidays, and he did make his feelings intelligible to Mr. Grey. Mr.

Grey, who was essentially a just man, saw that his partner was right, and made offers, but he would not accede to the only proposition which his partner made. "Let him go and look for a lawyer elsewhere," said his partner. They both of them knew that Mr. Scarborough had been thoroughly dishonest, but he had been an old client. His father before him had been a client of Mr. Grey's father. It was not in accordance with Mr. Grey's theory to treat the old man after this fashion. And he had taken intense interest in the matter. He had, first of all, been sure that Mountjoy Scarborough was the heir, and though Mountjoy Scarborough was not at all to his taste, he had been prepared to fight for him. He had now assured himself, after most laborious enquiry, that Augustus Scarborough was the heir, and although, in the course of the business, he had come to hate the cautious money-loving Augustus twice worse than the gambling spendthrift Mountjoy, still, in the cause of honesty, and truth, and justice, he fought for Augustus against the world at large, and against even the band of creditors, till the world at large and the band of creditors began to think that he was leagued with Augustus—so as to be one of those who would make large sums of money out of the irregularity of the affair. This made him cross, and put him into a very bad humour as he went back to Fulham.

One thing must be told of Mr. Grey which was very much to his discredit, and which, if generally known, would have caused his clients to think him to be unfit to be the recipient of their family secrets. He told all the secrets to Dolly. He was a man who could not possibly be induced to leave his business behind him at his office. It made the chief subject of conversation when he was at home. He would

even call Dolly into his bedroom late at night, bringing her out of bed for the occasion, to discuss with her some point of legal strategy—of legal but still honest strategy which had just occurred to him. Maybe he had not quite seen his way as to the honesty, and wanted Dolly's opinion on the subject. Dolly would come in in her dressing-gown, and sitting on his bed would discuss the matter with him as advocate against the devil. Sometimes she would be convinced; more frequently she would hold her own. But the points which were discussed in that way, and the strength of argumentation which was used on either side, would have surprised the clients, and the partner, and the clerks, and the eloquent barrister who was occasionally employed to support this side or the other. The eloquent barrister, or it might be the client himself, startled sometimes at the amount of enthusiasm which Mr. Grey would throw into his argument, would little dream that the very words had come from the young lady in her dressing-gown. To tell the truth, Miss Grey thoroughly liked these discussions, whether held on the lawn, or in the dining-room arm-chairs, or during the silent hours of the night. They formed indeed the very salt of her life. She felt herself to be the Conscience of the firm. Her father was the Reason. And the partner in her own phraseology was the—Devil. For it must be understood that Dolly Grey had a spice of fun about her of which her father had the full advantage. She would not have called her father's partner the "Devil" to any other ear but her father's. And that her father knew, understanding also the spirit in which the sobriquet had been applied. He did not think that his partner was worse than another man, nor did he think that his daughter so thought. The partner, whose name was Barry, was a man of average honesty, who would occasionally be surprised at the searching justness with which Mr. Grey would look into a matter after it had been already debated for a day or two in the office. But Mr. Barry, though he had the pleasure of Miss Grey's acquaintance, had no idea of the nature of the duties which she performed in the firm.

"I'm nearly broken-hearted about this abominable business," said Mr. Grey as he went upstairs to his dressing-room. The normal hour for dinner was half-past six. He had arrived on this occasion at half-past seven, and had paid a shilling extra to the cabman to drive him quick. The man

having a lame horse had come very slowly, fidgeting Mr. Grey into additional temporary discomfort. He had got his additional shilling, and Mr. Grey had only got the additional discomfort. "I declare I think he is the wickedest old man the world ever produced." This he said as Dolly followed him upstairs; but Dolly, wiser than her father, would say nothing about the wicked old man in the servants' hearing.

In five minutes Mr. Grey came down "dressed"—by the use of which word was implied the fact that he had shaken his neckcloth, washed his hands and face, and put on his slippers. It was understood in the household that though half-past six was the hour named for dinner, half-past seven was a much more probable time. Mr. Grey pertinaciously refused to have it changed. "*Stare super vias antiquas*," he had stoutly said when the proposition had been made to him—by which he had intended to imply that as during the last twenty years he had been compelled to dine at half-past six instead of six, he did not mean to be driven any farther in the same direction. Consequently his cook was compelled to prepare his dinner in such a manner that it might be eaten at one hour or the other, as chance would have it.

The dinner passed without much conversation other than that incidental to Mr. Grey's wants and comforts. His daughter knew that he had been at the office for eight hours, and knew also that he was not a young man. Every kind of little cossetting was therefore applied to him. There was a pheasant for dinner; and it was essentially necessary in Dolly's opinion that he should have first the wing quite hot and then the leg, also hot, and that the bread-sauce should be quite hot on the two occasions. For herself, if she had had an old crow for dinner it would have been the same thing. Tea and bread-and-butter were her luxuries, and her tea and bread-and-butter had been enjoyed three hours ago. "I declare I think that after all the leg is the better joint of the two."

"Then why don't you have the two legs?"

"There would be a savour of greediness in that, though I know that the leg will go down—and I shouldn't then be able to draw the comparison. I like to have them both, and I like always to be able to assert my opinion that the leg is the better joint. Now, how about the apple-pudding? You said I should have an apple-pudding."

From which it appeared that Mr. Grey was not superior to having the dinner discussed in his presence at the breakfast-table. The apple-pudding came and was apparently enjoyed. A large portion of it was put between two plates. "That's for Mrs. Grimes," suggested Mr. Grey. "I am not quite sure that Mrs. Grimes is worthy of it." "If you knew what it was to be left without a shilling of your husband's wages you'd think yourself worthy." When the conversation about the pudding was over Mr. Grey ate his cheese, and then sat quite still in his armchair over the fire while the things were being taken away. "I declare I think he is the wickedest man the world has ever produced," said Mr. Grey as soon as the door was shut, thus showing by the repetition of the words he had before used that his mind had been intent on Mr. Scarborough rather than on the pheasant.

"Why don't you have done with them?"

"That's all very well; but you wouldn't have done with them if you had known them all your life."

"I wouldn't spend my time and energies in white-washing any rascal," said Dolly with vigour.

"You don't know what you'd do. And a man isn't to be left in the lurch altogether because he's a rascal. Would you have a murderer hanged without some one to stand up for him?"

"Yes, I would," said Dolly thoughtlessly.

"And he mightn't have been a murderer after all; or not legally so, which as far as the law goes is the same thing."

But this special question had been often discussed between them, and Mr. Grey and Dolly did not intend to be carried away by it on the present occasion. "I know all about that," she said; "but this isn't a case of life and death. The old man is only anxious to save his property, and throws upon you all the burden of doing it. He never agrees with you as to anything you say."

"As to legal points he does."

"But he keeps you always in hot water, and puts forward so much villainy, that I would have nothing further to do with him. He has been so crafty, that you hardly know now which is in truth the heir."

"Oh yes, I do," said the lawyer. "I know very well, and am very sorry that it should be so. And I cannot but feel for the rascal because the dishonest effort was made on behalf of his own son."

"Why was it necessary?" said Dolly with sparks flying from her eye. "Throughout from the beginning he has been bad. Why was the woman not his wife?"

"Ah! why indeed? But had his sin consisted only in that, I should not have dreamed of refusing my assistance as a family lawyer. All that would have gone for nothing then."

"When evil creeps in," said Dolly sentimentally, "you cannot put it right afterwards."

"Never mind about that. We shall never get to the end if you go back to Adam and Eve."

"People don't go back often enough."

"Bother!" said Mr. Grey, finishing his second and last glass of port wine. "Do keep yourself in some degree to the question in dispute. In advising an attorney of to-day as to how he is to treat a client, you can't do any good by going back to Adam and Eve. Augustus is the heir, and I am bound to protect the property for him from these money-lending harpies. The moment the breath is out of the old man's body, they will settle down upon it if we leave them an inch of ground on which to stand. Every detail of his marriage must be made as clear as daylight; and that must be done in the teeth of former false statements."

"As far as I can see the money-lending harpies are the honestest lot of people concerned."

"The law is not on their side. They have got no right. The estate, as a fact, will belong to Augustus the moment his father dies. Mr. Scarborough endeavoured to do what he could for him whom he regarded as his eldest son. It was very wicked. He was adding a second and a worse crime to the first. He was flying in the face of the laws of his country. But he was successful; and he threw dust into my eyes, because he wanted to save the property for the boy. And he endeavoured to make it up to his second son by saving for him a second property. He was not selfish; and I cannot but feel for him."

"But you say he is the wickedest man the world ever produced."

"Because he boasts of it all, and cannot be got in any way to repent. He gives me my instructions as though from first to last he had been a highly honourable man, and only laughs at me when I object. And yet he must know that he may die any day. He only wishes to have this matter set straight so that he may die. I could

forgive him altogether if he would but once say that he was sorry for what he'd done. But he has completely the air of the fine old head of a family who thinks he is to be put into marble the moment the breath is out of his body, and that he richly deserves the marble he is to be put into."

"That is a question between him and his God," said Dolly.

"He hasn't got a God. He believes only in his own reason—and is content to do so, lying there on the very brink of eternity. He is quite content with himself because he thinks that he has not been selfish. He cares nothing that he has robbed everyone all round. He has no reverence for property and the laws which govern it. He was born only with the life-interest; and he has determined to treat it as though the fee-simple had belonged to him. It is his utter disregard for law—for what the law has decided, which makes me declare him to have been the wickedest man the world ever produced."

"It is his disregard for truth which makes you think so."

"He cares nothing for truth. He scorns it, and laughs at it. And yet about the little things of the world he expects his word to be taken as certainly as that of any other gentleman."

"I would not take it."

"Yes, you would, and would be right too. If he would say he'd pay me a hundred pounds to-morrow, or a thousand, I would have his word as soon as any other man's bond. And yet he has utterly got the better of me, and made me believe that a marriage took place, when there was no marriage. I think I'll have a cup of tea."

"You won't go to sleep, papa?"

"Oh yes, I shall. When I've been so troubled as that I must have a cup of tea." Mr. Grey was often troubled, and as a consequence Dolly was called up for consultations in the middle of the night.

At about one o'clock there came the well-known knock at Dolly's door and the usual invitation. Would she come into her father's room for a few minutes? Then her father trotted back to his bed, and Dolly of course followed him as soon as she had clothed herself decently. "The fact is, my dear, he wants me to go down to Tretton at once."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I thought I had made up my mind not to go; or I thought rather that I should

be able to make up my mind not to go. But it is possible that down there I may have some effect for good."

"What does he want of you?"

"There is a long question about raising money with which Augustus desires to buy the silence of the creditors."

"Could he get the money?" asked Dolly.

"Yes, I think he could. The property at present is altogether unembarrassed. To give Mr. Scarborough his due he has never put his name to a scrap of paper. Nor has he had occasion to do so. The Tretton pottery people want more land, or rather more water, and a large sum of money will be forthcoming. But he doesn't see the necessity of giving Mr. Tyrwhit a penny-piece, or certainly Mr. Hart. He would send them away howling without a scruple. Now Augustus is anxious to settle with them, for some reason which I do not clearly understand. But he wishes to do so without any interference on his father's part. In fact, he and his father have very different ideas as to the property. The squire regards it as his, but Augustus thinks that any day may make it his own. In fact, they are on the very verge of quarrelling." Then after a long debate Dolly consented that her father should go down to Tretton, and act if possible the part of peace-maker.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE CARROLL FAMILY.

"AUNT CARROLL is coming to dinner to-day," said Dolly the next day with a serious face.

"I know she is. Have a nice dinner for her. I don't think she ever has a nice dinner at home."

"And the three eldest girls are coming."

"Three!"

"You asked them yourself on Sunday."

"Very well. They said their papa would be away on business." It was understood that Mr. Carroll was never asked to the Manor House.

"Business! There is a club he belongs to where he dines and gets drunk once a month. It's the only thing he does regularly."

"They must have their dinner, at any rate," said Mr. Grey. "I don't think they should suffer because he drinks." This had been a subject much discussed between them, but on the present occasion Miss Grey would not renew it. She despatched her father in a cab, the cab having been procured because he was supposed to be a quarter of an hour late, and then went to work to order her dinner.

It has been said that Miss Grey hated the Carrolls; but she hated the daughters worse than the mother, and of all the people she hated in the world she hated Amelia Carroll the worst. Amelia, the eldest, entertained an idea that she was more of a personage in the world's eyes than her cousin—that she went to more parties, which certainly was true if she went to any—that she wore finer clothes, which was also true, and that she had a lover, whereas Dolly Grey—as she called her cousin behind her back—had none. This lover had something to do with horses, and had only been heard of, had never been seen at the Manor House. Sophy was a good deal hated also, being a forward, flirting, tricky girl of seventeen, who had just left the school at which Uncle John had paid for her education. Georgina, the third, was still at school under similar circumstances, and was pardoned her egregious noisiness and romping propensities under the score of youth. She was sixteen, and was possessed of terrible vitality. "I am sure they take after their father altogether," Mr. Grey had once said when the three left the Manor House together.

At half-past six punctually they came. Dolly heard a great clatter of four people leaving their clogs and cloaks in the hall, and would not move out of the unused drawing-room, in which for the moment she was seated. Betsey had to prepare the dinner-table downstairs, and would have been sadly discomfited had she been driven to do it in the presence of three Carroll girls. For it must be understood that Betsey had no greater respect for the Carroll girls than her mistress. "Well, Aunt Carroll; how does the world use you?"

"Very badly. You haven't been up to see me for ten days."

"I haven't counted; but when I do come I don't often do any good. How are Minna, and Brenda, and Potsey?"

"Poor Potsey has got a nasty boil under her arm."

"It comes from eating too much toffy," said Georgina. "I told her it would."

"How very nasty you are," said Miss Carroll. "Do leave the child and her ailments alone."

"Poor papa isn't very well either," said Sophy, who was supposed to be her father's pet.

"I hope his state of health will not debar him from dining with his friends to-night," said Miss Grey.

"You have always something ill-natured to say about papa," said Sophy.

"Nothing will ever keep him back when conviviality demands his presence." This came from his afflicted wife, who in spite of all his misfortunes would ever speak with some respect of her husband's employments. "He wasn't at all in a fit state to go to-night, but he had promised, and that was enough."

When they had waited three-quarters of an hour, Amelia began to complain—certainly not without reason. "I wonder why Uncle John always keeps us waiting in this way!"

"Papa has unfortunately something to do with his time, which is not altogether his own." There was not much in these words, but the tone in which they were uttered would have crushed anyone more susceptible than Amelia Carroll. But at that moment the cab arrived, and Dolly went down to meet her father.

"Have they come?" he asked.

"Come," she answered, taking his gloves and comforter from him, and giving him a kiss as she did so. "That girl upstairs is nearly famished."

"I won't be half a moment," said the repentant father, hastening upstairs to go through his ordinary dressing arrangement.

"I wouldn't hurry for her," said Dolly; "but of course you'll hurry. You always do, don't you, papa?" Then they sat down to dinner.

"Well, girls, what is your news?"

"We were out to-day on the Brompton Road," said the eldest, "and there came up Prince Chitakov's drag with four roans."

"Prince Chitakov! I didn't know there was such a prince."

"Oh dear yes; with very stiff moustachios, turned up high at the corners, and pink cheeks, and a very sharp nobby-looking hat, with a light-coloured grey coat, and light gloves. You must know the prince."

"Upon my word I never heard of him, my dear. What did the prince do?"

"He was tooling his own drag, and he had a lady with him on the box. I never saw anything more tasty than her dress—dark red silk with little fluffy fur ornaments all over it. I wonder who she was?"

"Mrs. Chitakov, probably," said the attorney.

"I don't think the prince is a married man," said Sophy.

"They never are, for the most part," said Amelia; "and she wouldn't be Mrs. Chitakov, Uncle John."

"Wouldn't she now? What would she be? Can either of you tell me what the wife of a Prince Chitakov would call herself?"

"Princess of Chitakov, of course," said Sophy. "It's the Princess of Wales."

"But it isn't the Princess of Christian, nor yet the Princess of Teck, nor the Princess of England. I don't see why the lady shouldn't be Mrs. Chitakov, if there is such a lady."

"Papa, don't bamboozle her," said his daughter.

"But," continued the attorney, "why shouldn't the lady have been his wife? Don't married ladies wear little fluffy fur ornaments?"

"I wish, John, you wouldn't talk to the girls in that strain," said their mother. "It really isn't becoming."

"To suggest that the lady was the gentleman's wife?"

"But I was going to say," continued Amelia, "that as the prince drove by, he kissed his hand—he did, indeed. And Sophy and I were walking along as demurely as possible. I never was so knocked of a heap in all my life."

"He did," said Sophy. "It's the most impertinent thing I ever heard. If my father had seen it he'd have had the prince off the box of the coach in no time."

"Then, my dear," said the attorney, "I am very glad that your father did not see it." Poor Dolly, during this conversation about the prince, sat angry and silent, thinking to herself in despair of what extremes of vulgarity even a first cousin of her own could be guilty. That she should be sitting at table with a girl who could boast that a reprobate foreigner had kissed his hand to her from the box of a fashionable four-horsed coach! For it was in that light that Miss Grey regarded it. "And did you have any further adventures besides this memorable encounter with the prince?"

"Nothing nearly so interesting," said Sophy.

"That was hardly to be expected," said the attorney. "Jane, will you have a glass of port wine? Girls, you must have a glass of port wine to support you after your disappointment with the prince."

"We were not disappointed in the least," said Amelia.

"Pray, pray let the subject drop," said Dolly.

"That is because the prince did not kiss his hand to you," said Sophy. Then Miss Grey sank again into silence, crushed beneath this last blow.

In the evening, when the dinner-things had been taken away, a matter of business came up, and took the place of the prince and his mustachios. Mrs. Carroll was most anxious to know whether her brother could "lend" her a small sum of twenty pounds. It came out in conversation that the small sum was needed to satisfy some imperious demand made upon Mr. Carroll by a tailor. "He must have clothes, you know," said the poor woman, wailing. "He doesn't have many, but he must have some." There had been other appeals on the same subject made not very long since, and to tell the truth, Mr. Grey did require to have the subject argued in fear of the subsequent remarks which would be made to him afterwards by his daughter if he gave the money too easily. The loan had to be arranged in full conclave, as otherwise Mrs. Carroll would have found it difficult to obtain access to her brother's ear. But the one auditor whom she feared was her niece. On the present occasion Miss Grey simply took up her book to show that the subject was one which had no interest for her; but she did undoubtedly listen to all that was said on the subject. "There was never anything settled about poor Patrick's clothes," said Mrs. Carroll in a half-whisper. She did not care how much her own children heard, and she knew how vain it was to attempt so to speak that Dolly should not hear.

"I dare say something ought to be done at some time," said Mr. Grey, who knew that he would be told, when the evening was over, that he would give away all his substance to that man if he were asked.

"Papa has not had a new pair of trousers this year," said Sophy.

"Except those green ones he wore at the races," said Georgina.

"Hold your tongue, miss," said her mother. "That was a pair that I made up for him and sent them to the man to get pressed."

"When the hundred a year was arranged for all our dresses," said Amelia, "not a word was said about papa. Of course, papa is a trouble."

"I don't see that he is more of a trouble than anyone else," said Sophy. "Uncle John would not like not to have any clothes."

"No, I should not, my dear."

"And his own income is all given up to the house uses." Here Sophy touched imprudently on a sore subject. His "own" income consisted of what had been saved out of his wife's fortune, and was thus named as in opposition to the larger sum paid to Mrs. Carroll by Mr. Grey. There was one hundred and fifty pounds a year coming from settled property, which had been preserved by the lawyer's care, and which was regarded in the family as "papa's own."

It certainly is essential for respectability that something should be set apart from a man's income for his wearing apparel, and though the money was, perhaps, improperly so designated, Dolly would not have objected had she not thought that it had already gone to the race-course—in company with the green trousers. She had her own means of obtaining information as to the Carroll family. It was very necessary that she should do so, if the family was to be kept on its legs at all. "I don't think any good can come from discussing what my uncle does with the money." This was Dolly's first speech. "If he is to have it, let him have it, but let him have as little as possible."

"I never heard anybody so cross as you always are to papa," said Sophy.

"Your cousin Dorothy is very fortunate," said Mrs. Carroll. "She does not know what it is to want for anything."

"She never spends anything—on herself," said her father. "It is Dolly's only fault that she won't."

"Because she has it all done for her," said Amelia.

Dolly had gone back to her book, and disdained to make any further reply. Her father felt that quite enough had been said about it, and was prepared to give the twenty pounds, under the idea that he might be thought to have made a stout fight upon the subject. "He does want them very badly—for decency's sake," said the poor wife, thus winding up her plea. Then Mr. Grey got out his cheque-book and wrote the cheque for twenty pounds. But he made it payable, not to Mr., but to Mrs. Carroll.

"I suppose, papa, nothing can be done about Mr. Carroll." This was said by Dolly as soon as the family had withdrawn.

"In what way 'done,' my dear?"

"As to settling some further sum for himself."

"He'd only spend it, my dear."

"That would be intended," said Dolly.

"And then he would come back just the same."

"But in that case he should have nothing more. Though they were to declare that he hadn't a pair of trousers in which to appear at a race-course, he shouldn't have it."

"My dear," said Mr. Grey, "you cannot get rid of the gnats of the world. They will buzz and sting and be a nuisance. Poor Jane suffers worse from this gnat than you or I. Put up with it; and understand in your own mind that when he comes for another twenty pounds he must have it. You needn't tell him, but so it must be."

"If I had my way," said Dolly after ten minutes' silence, "I would punish him. He is an evil thing, and should be made to reap the proper reward. It is not that I wish to avoid my share of the world's burdens; but that justice should be done. I don't know which I hate the worst—Uncle Carroll or Mr. Scarborough."

The next day was Sunday, and Dolly was very anxious before breakfast to induce her father to say that he would go to church with her; but he was inclined to be obstinate, and fell back upon his usual excuse, saying that there were Scarborough papers which it would be necessary that he should read before he started for Tretton on the following day. "Papa, I think it would do you good if you came."

"Well, yes; I suppose it would. That is the intention; but somehow it fails with me sometimes."

"Do you think that you hate people when you go to church, as much as when you don't?"

"I am not sure that I hate anybody very much."

"I do."

"That seems an argument for your going."

"But if you don't hate them it is because you won't take the trouble, and that again is not right. If you would come to church you would be better for it all round. You'd hate Uncle Carroll's idleness and abominable self-indulgence worse than you do."

"I don't love him as it is, my dear."

"And I should hate him less. I felt last night as though I could rise from my bed, and go and murder him."

"Then you certainly ought to go to church."

"And you had passed him off just as

though he were a gnat from which you were to receive as little annoyance as possible, forgetting the influence he must have on those six unfortunate children. Don't you know that you gave her that twenty pounds simply to be rid of a disagreeable subject?"

"I should have given it ever so much sooner, only that you were looking at me."

"I know you would, you dear, sweet, kind-hearted, but most un-Christian father. You must come to church in order that some idea of what Christianity demands of you may make its way into your heart. It is not what the clergyman may say of you, but that your mind will get away for two hours from that other reptile and his concerns." Then Mr. Grey, with a loud long sigh, allowed his boots, and his gloves, and his church-going hat, and his church-going umbrella to be brought to him. It was, in fact, his aversion to these articles that Dolly had to encounter.

It may be doubted whether the church services of that day did Mr. Grey much good; but they seemed to have had some effect upon his daughter from the fact that in the afternoon she wrote a letter in kindly words to her aunt. "Papa is going to Tretton, and I will come up to you on Tuesday. I have got a frock which I will bring with me as a present for Potsey; and I will make her sew on the buttons for herself. Tell Minna I will lend her that book I spoke of. About those boots, I will go with Georgina to the bootmaker." But as to Amelia and Sophy she could not bring herself to say a good-natured word, so deep in her heart had sunk that sin of which they had been guilty with reference to Prince Chitakov.

On that night she had a long discussion with her father respecting the affairs of the Scarborough family. The discussion was held in the dining-room, and may, therefore, be supposed to have been premeditated. Those at night in Mr. Grey's own bedroom were generally the result of sudden thought. "I should lay down the law to him," began Dolly.

"The law is the law," said her father.

"I don't mean the law in that sense. I should tell him firmly what I advised, and should then make him understand that if he did not follow my advice I must withdraw. If his son is willing to pay these money-lenders what sums they have actually advanced; and if by any effort on his part the money can be raised, let it be done.

There seems to be some justice in repaying out of the property that which was lent to the property when by Mr. Scarborough's own doing the property was supposed to go into the eldest son's hands. Though the eldest son and the money-lenders be spendthrifts and profligates alike, there will in that be something of fairness. Go there prepared with your opinion. But if either father or son will not accept it, then depart, and shake the dust from your feet."

"You propose it all, as though it were the easiest thing in the world."

"Easy or difficult, I would not discuss anything of which the justice may hereafter be disputed."

What was the result of the consultation on Mr. Grey's mind, he did not declare. But he resolved to take his daughter's advice in all that she said to him.

ABOUT AN OLD BRIDGE.

MUCH less than sixty years ago Knightsbridge could still be fairly described as "the first village from London on the great western road."

Like other villages, it stood apart, straggling about the highway, and round its green adorned with the pound, the watch-house, and the parish pump. The very stocks and may-pole had not so many years before been gathered into the limbo of the past.

Along the Kensington road—ankle-deep in mud in winter, and as rich in summer dust—ancient mansions, standing in their own wide grounds, peered from among dense shrubberies and rook-haunted groves over the rural expanse of Hyde Park. Towards Fulham and Chelsea lay meadows, market-gardens, and orchards, with now and again a corn-field, separated by hawthorn hedges, and crossed by lanes and footpaths leading to stiles and barred gates; while in the direction of Westminster the historic Five Fields, traversed by the King's Road, stretched nearly up to the queen's palace of Buckingham House.

London had, it is true, come very near from the Piccadilly side, but the line of street was by no means continuous.

West of St. George's Hospital (not the modern building) small old houses, not much better than large cottages, stood detached in their own gardens, and the homestead of a dairy farm, with the fields behind, occupied the site of Wilton Place.

Time was when the Five Fields—where

Dean Swift was so pleased with haymaking—were really rural meadows, with green hedges and tall trees, and the swift stream of the Westbourn winding under its willows to meet Father Thames.

Legh Richmond, in 1806, when curate of the Lock Hospital—it stood then at the bottom of Grosvenor Place—and living in Chapel Street, wrote of the pretty, quiet fields behind his house.

The upper part of Grosvenor Place had been built forty years before, but Belgravia was as yet awaiting Cubitt and Seth Smith to bid the stately squares and streets, which were to eclipse the ancient glories of Bloomsbury and Marylebone, arise as if by the touch of an enchanter's wand.

Kingsbridge seems to have been anciently called Kingsbridge, and was represented only by a large wood and the bridge which Edward the Confessor is said to have built. But a century or two later it was called Knightsbridge, and the change of name is accounted for by an old local tradition that once on a time a band of gentle pilgrims set forth from London along the great western road, to visit perhaps the famous shrine of St. Joseph of Glastonbury. But they had got no further than the royal manor of Hyde, when two knights of the company fell into such foul debate as could only be settled by blows.

That both might have equal vantage of ground, they charged each other from opposite sides of the stone bridge, and fought so fiercely that both were mortally wounded. In memory of this fatal encounter men changed the name of Kingsbridge to Knightsbridge. Perhaps the legend is true, some are.

The bourn, or brook, which the bridge spanned, rose, like the Tybourn and Old-bourn, in the Hampstead hills, and flowed by Bayswater across the Oxford road and through Hyde Park, whence it issued under the bridge, which stood on the site of the modern Albert Gate. Thence it ran with a broad and swift current through the fields of Knightsbridge and Ebury into the Thames, not far from St. Barnabas' Church.

Queen Caroline made the Serpentine in 1734, by deepening and widening the bourn, and adding to it and each other some large ponds in the park, by which it flowed. It was afterwards cut off at the Kensington Gardens end and diverted into a sewer to prevent the pollution of the new lake. It is now a sewer from its source to its mouth.

This, alas! has been the hard fate of all those streams which anciently delighted the Londoners with their silver currents and the "clack of their many mills." Choked and defiled from age to age they became at last mere nuisances, forsaken alike of "sweet forget-me-nots and skimming swallows," irreclaimable criminals on whom sanitary science has by degrees enforced the inexorable sentence of solitary imprisonment for life.

The little streamlet which receives the overflow of the Serpentine follows along its short course towards Albert Gate that of the old bourn, which used in flood-time to make the ground hereabout so wet and swampy, that the road along this part of the park got the name of Rotten Row.

In 1556, when all England was furious at the "Spanish marriage," and Sir Thomas Wyatt led his Kentish men to London—he had been obliged to come round by Kingston, London Bridge being closed against him—he halted a night at Knightsbridge, and next day, leaving his main body and cannon at the park corner, marched with five companies to the City. But being surrounded by Queen Mary's army, he was made prisoner, and soon after tried and executed, and his head set up on the gallows at Hay Hill above the bodies of three of his fellow-conspirators, hanged there in chains.

"Our village" saw stirring times, too, when Lord Essex re-entered London in hot haste with the remnant of his Parliamentarians, who had been so roughly handled by the king's troops at Brentford. The Londoners were in a terrible fright, for they expected every hour to see the waving plumes and long rapiers of Prince Rupert's life-guards come flashing through the streets. The rebellious House of Commons and the Lord Mayor and aldermen felt, doubtless, especially uncomfortable. But as time wore on, and no sign of the enemy appeared, they began to recover heart. A large redoubt was thrown up at the park corner to cover the main road and a lane which led by the fields to Westminster—now Grosvenor Place. All sorts and conditions of men, and women too, gentle and simple, young and old, thronged to the work, the women and children carrying away the earth in baskets as the men dug it out, so that the redoubt was soon finished and armed with cannon. Traces of it may still be found in the ground. Daunted by these preparations, the king's army made no advance in force, though skirmishes

occurred more than once in the very streets of Knightsbridge, relics of which in the shape of pieces of armour and weapons, and skeletons of men and horses, have been unearthed from time to time.

Knightsbridge has houses as old as in any other part of London. It had also, till the last five-and-thirty years, inns, the old-world and countrified air of which made them what painters call "bits" in the midst of their more modern surroundings.

The White Horse, in St. George's Place, with its tiled roof and tall sign-post, and water-trough shaded by a green tree, with benches set out in front for the use of all fresco drinkers—it was a great place of call for Her Majesty's guardsmen and market-gardeners—was only pulled down about twenty years ago to make room for the stately Alexandra Hotel. Under the roof of The Swan, at the corner of Sloane Street, Sir W. Barclay and Sir W. Perkins, with their associates, laid their plans for the assassination of King William the Third. Both time and place were determined on—a narrow part of the lonely road between Brentford and Hammersmith, when the king should be returning to Kensington from Hampton Court.

But Captain Porter split on his companions, who were tried and hanged at Tyburn.

Strange that Porter should have turned informer against Barclay and Perkins!

Another old inn was The Half-way House, which stood in the middle of the road near Rutland House, now Rutland Gate.

It was timber-built, with huge brick chimneys, lozenge windows, and inside a labyrinth of low rooms, rickety staircases, and winding passages. Divers uncanny legends hung about it, with strong traditions of Jerry Abershaw. When it was pulled down in 1848 a secret stair was found in the thickness of the wall, leading to the stables, contrived, no doubt, to enable any "knight of the spur," here run to earth by the officers of the law, to swiftly and secretly saddle Black Bess and steal away down the western road.

Knightsbridge, in fact, was a very nasty place indeed for travellers in the good old times, and though the road to Kensington was patrolled at night by cavalry up to the close of the last century, robberies were of constant occurrence.

In the newspapers of the period we continually meet with such paragraphs as that "The Bristol mail was stopped and robbed

at Knightsbridge by a footpad, who took the postboy's horse and rode off to London;" or that—this was in 1774—"Mr. Jackson, of the Requests' Court, was attacked at Knightsbridge by highwaymen, one of whom he shot dead and the rest ran away." Doubtless the postboys, like the innkeepers, were often in league with the robbers, and stood in for their share of the spoil.

But if the hostelries did not exactly flourish in an odour of sanctity, the old lodge within the park, popularly called the Cake House, was at least without reproach. Its walls were but lath and plaster, and its low roof tiled, and it sold only cakes and tarts and syllabubs; yet it was the fashionable resort of the fine ladies and gentlemen of the day when fatigued with the exertion of riding in their coaches or walking—seeing and being seen—in the ring hard by.

The ring was the prototype of the modern Drive and Ladies' Mile.

Pepys tells us how on Sunday, 25th April, 1669, he "carried his wife to the lodge in the park, where much company and the weather very pleasant, and there in our coach"—their own new coach, mind, with the fine black horses, bought and paid for—"eat a cheesecake and drank a tankard of milk."

On 16th June he went there again, after the "frolic" which had obliged him to sleep in his clothes till five in the evening, and "eat a mess of cream."

Perhaps this was held to be a remedy in Pepys' time for that generally dilapidated condition of the inner man so often consequent on frolics—just as an afternoon basin of their celebrated mutton broth, at The Mitre, in Fleet Street, was in vogue with fast young gentlemen similarly afflicted five-and-twenty years ago.

Quite a different sort of place—and perhaps not quite so innocent—was the World's End, just outside the park. Pepys seems to have been a pretty good customer here too. For instance, on the 31st May, 1669, he took his wife, and Mary Batelier and her sweetheart, the Dutch gentleman, "to the World's End, a drinking-house by the park, and there merry, and so home late." Cake House and World's End have long since departed, and their places know them no more.

The old chapel at Knightsbridge, of which the modern handsome Trinity Chapel is the lineal descendant, was originally attached to a lazaret-house or hospital for the cure of skin diseases, held

by the Glassington family under the monks of Westminster. In the first half of the last century this chapel had, like the one in Mayfair, the reputation of being a convenient place where the marriage-knot would be tied with secrecy and despatch, for all comers, by "discreet" ministers, who would ask no questions but those set down in the prayer-book.

Here in 1700—though in no secret fashion—Sir Thomas Walpole was married to Miss Kate Shorter, the pretty daughter of the rich Lord Mayor.

Here, too, in 1705 were wedded Henry Graham and the Countess of Derwentwater. She was the youngest daughter of King Charles the Second, by Miss Davis, the famous actress, and had married in 1687, when only in her fifteenth year and known to the world as Lady Mary Tudor, Francis Ratcliffe, afterwards Earl of Derwentwater. Their eldest son, the third earl, died on the scaffold in the cause of his cousin, the Pretender, and his brother Charles, thirty years later, for his share in the rebellion of '45 met a like fate.

Thirteen years after their marriage the earl and countess, who seem to have lived unhappily together, were divorced. He did not long survive the separation, and she next wedded Mr. Graham, who died in a few months, and she then found a third husband in Mr. Rooke, by whose death she was left for the third time a widow. Twenty years afterwards—in 1726—the countess herself died in France, where she had long resided, in her fifty-fourth year.

Her mother, Mary, or Moll Davis, was an actress of the Duke of York's company, and seems to have won the heart of King Charles—if he had any—by her incomparable dancing in boy's clothes, for according to Pepys she had no good looks. However, in her picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller, now in Lord Braybrooke's splendid collection at Audley End, she is represented as a fine handsome woman.

The old Knightsbridge mansion of Kingston House was closely connected in the last century with the fortunes of that notorious duchess whose romantic public career began with her appearance in her twentieth year, fresh from the Devonshire home of the Chudleighs, as a maid of honour to the Princess of Wales (mother of George the Third), and ended, as far as England was concerned, with her conviction at Westminster Hall for bigamy.

Before she had been long at Court, the young Duke of Hamilton fell desperately

in love with the handsome Miss Chudleigh, and on the eve of his departure for the Continent to make the grand tour offered her his hand, which she accepted, and they were privately engaged.

After he had been some little time abroad a would-be rival appeared in the person of Captain Hervey, son of Lord Bristol, who contrived by intercepting letters and other foul play to detach her affections from her lover, and finally persuaded her into a clandestine marriage.

The next day the newly-wedded pair parted, and she resumed her duties at Court.

When the Duke of Hamilton came home, he was thunderstruck to find himself apparently jilted by his mistress. What mystified him still more was that he could get no intelligible explanation. So he retired alike disconsolate and indignant.

She on her part seems really to have loved him, and cared little for Hervey, to whom she now—having found out some of his tricks against Hamilton—took a positive aversion. To escape from her husband, and perhaps also from the memory of the past, she travelled abroad, plunging into all the pleasures and dissipations of continental society; and on her return to England, finding that her husband seemed disposed to legally claim her, she baffled him by bribing the parish clerk to cut out and deliver to herself the leaf of the church register containing the entry of their marriage.

The clergyman who had married them being dead, the only other witness, besides the clerk, was her own maid, of whom she felt secure.

Time passed, and Captain Hervey succeeded to the earldom of Bristol, the honours of which his wife was desirous to share with him, whilst hating himself; and by bribing the clerk again she got the abstracted leaf restored to the register. But her husband repelled her, and in the sequel she formed an intimacy with the Duke of Kingston, who finally offered to marry her.

Lord Bristol, who wished to be quit of his wife, agreeing to offer no opposition, she petitioned for a dissolution of her marriage with him, which, in the absence of certain evidence, was granted; and in 1769 she was married to the Duke of Kingston.

Four years afterwards he died, leaving all his fortune to his widow, to the great

disgust of his heir-at-law. Then came an unexpected dénouement.

Her old servant, thinking she had been badly used by the duchess, turned traitor, and informed the late duke's nephew of all the circumstances of the first marriage. He at once indicted the duchess for bigamy, and she was committed for trial.

It was at this time that Foote, a low comedian in more than one sense of the term, made his audacious attempt to extort money from her by threatening to bring out a play, written by himself, in which the character of the duchess was severely lashed in the part of Lady Kitty Crocodile. So pointed was the allusion that it was unmistakable.

Had Foote been only moderately rapacious he might have pocketed the fifteen hundred pounds she was willing to pay; but he was too greedy. The Lord Chamberlain was applied to, and the play condemned.

The trial came on, and the duchess was found guilty, but pleaded her privileges as a peeress, and got off with only a solemn judicial caution not to do it again.

Soon after she left England, and lived magnificently till her death in 1787 at her splendid mansion at Fontainebleau, on the ample fortune left her by her second husband, the Duke of Kingston.

ON THE SHORE.

My love and I went wandering hand in hand,
Upon the grey sea-shore one winter day;
The small white waves crept slowly towards the land,
Then turned again like children in their play,
But to return once more, methought they'd greet
My love, and lay their homage at her feet.
"Ah! they would kiss thy feet, my dear," I cried.
"E'en nature yearns to pay thee homage due,
The ocean sprites would woo thee from my side,
And deem thee like their kindred, aye, untrue.
They shall not touch thee!" Then I took her hand,
And drew her nearer to the wide safe land.
Swift then the envious sea came nearer by,
And washed her footsteps from the darkling shore,
It would not even let them silent lie,
Lest other touch than his should sweep them o'er.
"So, dearest!" said I, "would thy love should be
But mine alone, as mine is but for thee!"

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

II.

IT was on the morning after our arrival at Edinburgh that Uncle Jock's despotic tendencies came out. With the fresh upland air, with the scones on the breakfast table, the oat-bread and marmalade that filled in the interstices among the

"white fish," the chops—or collops rather it should be said, with a due regard to local colour—the "haum and eggs," and other substantial accessories of a solid Scotch breakfast, polishing off the corners of what an American friend on our right pronounced a very square meal—with all this reinforcement Jock's spirits and determination rose higher and higher. It was a real treat to him to have the opportunity of showing the sights of the city to an Englishman and a stranger, and he would not permit any purposeless strolls or morning lounges that might mar the freshness of our first impressions. But he could not shut out the view of the cheerful street or of the abyss below—almost filled up with the roofs of railway stations—from which issued a constant stream of people, of cabs, and loaded waggons; nor of the Scott monument, about which somebody excited his ire by remarking that it was like the Albert Memorial on a smaller scale. "Aye, aye, madam," rejoined Jock; "but then it's like Columbus and the egg. Ours," proudly, "ours is the original, don't you mind."

"Now, I'm going to take you to the Calton Hill," announced Jock the moment breakfast was finished, "and I'd like to lead you there blindfold." But as he was hurrying us along Princes Street, Mrs. Gillies ever and again calling a halt, to look in at a shop-window or suggest some reminiscence, recalled by a street or building, to her impatient brother-in-law, we suddenly came upon the two middle-aged young ladies of the Scotch steamer, breathless and with an anxious wildered look upon them. They had just come up from the station, having slept on board the night before, come up interminable flights of steps, and landed in an upper country utterly strange and bewildering, and their friends—they had lost their friends, the two gentlemen, who were to follow with the baggage—had waited for them, indeed, for hours at the top of the stairs—those interminable stairs. But perhaps, alas! there was another way out. "Why, likely, leddies," rejoined Jock, "or how would the cabs and the cawridges manage?" They had not thought of that, and what was to become of them left alone and forlorn in a strange city? "You'll just go down and wait in the station," quoth Jock good-naturedly, "and we'll have the city scoured but we'll send your bonnie laddies back to you."

A little comforted, the ladies passed on; but I wondered how Jock intended to

redeem his pledge. However, in a few hundred yards, as luck would have it, we saw the broad backs of the missing pilgrims hurrying along in a directly opposite direction. Now, in Edinburgh there is always a bare-legged little urchin in sight, on the look-out for a bawbee, and such an one was despatched to bring back the wandering sheep. And presently they come back to us, worn and anxious-looking. They, too, have been searching the city high and low—high and low with a vengeance, down into the cellars of the railway-stations, and up into the attics of the grass-market.

"And," cries the elder of the two—for after the first effusion of gratitude for news of their companions, the desire of being revenged on somebody asserts itself—"I don't think much of your city, sir, and the inhabitants speak a language nobody can make out. It's nothing but a wilderness of miserable steps, and beggarly houses. Thank you, however, for your information—although we were proceeding that way when you stopped us." And away they went.

"How happy the poor things will be when they meet," cried Mrs. Gillies effusively.

"Happy!" rejoined Jock; "why, they'll quarrel for the next two hours as to whose fault it was. The daft bodies, they've crackit my whistle already."

Yes, it was just the rift within the lute, for, as Uncle Jock once more led the way, less briskly, we could hear him muttering: "Meeserable steps and beggarly houses!" and then, when we came to the foot of the Calton Hill—or rather, of the mound that crowns the hill, for there is a gentle rise all the way from that central spot where the post-office stands, and the register-office, and trams and omnibuses congregate, and a tall bridge crosses the ravine between the new town, where we stand, and the auld Edinburgh of song and story—Uncle Jock suddenly threw up his office of cicerone, and handed us over to the charge of the regular guide, a hale old fellow in an official kind of dress, with a brass plate in front of his cap, inscribed "City Guide."

A worthy successor, as far as enthusiasm goes, to Uncle Jock. He takes us up the steep track with a kind of run that is sadly trying to poor Mrs. Gillies; nor will he permit her to stand and rest by the way, or look at the view. "It's naething yet, mem, to what it wull be, so ye'll push on, if you please, to the very top." And so we arrive presently at the summit, which

is crowned by an observatory, in the fashion of a Grecian temple—a sort of pocket observatory, with hardly room for the Astronomer-Royal to turn round in, and so you see the instruments sticking out of the roof in a way that rather mars its perfect symmetry. "And now just tak' a look round, if ye please," cries the old man with conscious pride, and certainly it is a view to be proud of.

From this side we see the old town of Edinburgh sloping steeply down from the foot of the Castle Rock—a mass of tall grim houses perched upon a narrow-backed ridge, with long ranges of steps leading down into the valley below, and narrow openings, called wynds, pierced in the stony mass—and where the houses stop at the bottom of the hill, there is Holyrood, forlorn and yet majestic, upon which all the smoke of the town seems to rest. Beyond all is green and countrified, with some attempt at a royal park and gardens, while close from the side of Holyrood rises a bluff green mound that breaks off on this side with steeply-scarped terraces of rock—the heights known as Salisbury Crags—and behind these crags, with a green valley between, rises the conical peak known and famous over half the globe as Arthur's Seat. As a background to the whole, the horizon is bounded by a majestic range of the hills known as the Pentland Hills, a green and breezy-looking range, half veiled by the driving mists.

And now we find the utility of our guide, for he can show us a host of things that we shall afterwards be proud to say that we have seen, although we might have hesitated at the expenditure of the shoe-leather and vital force necessary to visit them one by one. "There's some like antiquities," says the presiding genius of Auld Reekie, "and there's some like modernities, but wi' your kind permission, gentlefolk, I'll show you them a'."

And very nicely he shows them too. He traces out for us the track of the old city walls that, starting from the foot of the Castle Crag, encircled a portion of the old town, and how, as a natural defence, the valley of railway-stations was once occupied by a small lake or loch, known as the Nor' Loch: "Where they threw their creeminals, as folks say, and whiles all the dead cats and dogs of the toon." Our old friend remembered this as a dank evil-smelling bog, and seems to think the white clouds of steam and shrill whistling that now proceed from it, to be greatly

preferable. But he regrets the old Tolbooth—the scene of the Porteous Riots immortalised in *The Heart of Midlothian*—while the prison just below, where we catch sight of a dismal procession of women going round about a small paved yard, taking their morning exercise, is, he tells us, already partly doomed to destruction, as partaking too much of the dungeon-like and feudal character to meet modern requirements. But there, next to the prison, is part of the old burying-ground, in one corner of which, under a small round tower, lies David Hume, the historian, with a cross over the entrance to the vault, rather inappropriately as far as David is concerned. And there, nearer to Holyrood, is another burying-ground, and with the aid of a glass you may make out the tomb of Fergusson, the poet—not that we any of us know anything about Fergusson—and even our guide is nonplussed when we ask him what he wrote. “Well, it was just pothery,” he replies; but then the tomb was placed there by Robert Burns—poor, foolish, hot-headed Robbie, in the first excitement of receiving a handsome draft from his publisher. And not far from that is the tomb of Adam Smith, who wrote *The Wealth of Nations*. But we have had enough of monuments.

“Aye, but there’s mair to be seen yet,” cries our guide with an air of triumph, and then hurries us round to the other side of the observatory. And there bursts upon our eyes a view that almost takes the breath away in surprise and delight. There stretches the Firth of Forth far away to the sea, over which rests a soft silvery haze, and the sea loses itself in mountains, and the mountains again in clouds. And the clouds as they shift and vary with sometimes a gleam of sunshine and sometimes a driving shower, reveal at each change fresh glimpses of the land beyond, the land of mountain and flood. There you might catch a glimpse of Dunfermline where the king, in the old ballad, drank the bluid-red wine, and there of the twin Lomonds—not to be confounded with their elder brother Ben—at the foot of which lies Loch Leven, where lies the castled isle that once held Queen Mary a prisoner, and hills and peaks beyond that one may guess at but hardly see. With it all a magnificent canopy of clouds and a sweet soft light everywhere diffused. And the town—I was forgetting the town in the magnificence of its surroundings, but there

it lies at our feet, the new town of Edinburgh, all marvellously handsome and clean—fine streets, and grassy slopes, and pleasant gardens.

The old guide looks quite gratified by our admiration. “But wad that it had been clearer,” he cries. “Had ye been here but the yester morn, then wad I have shown you the Bass Rock; then wad I have shown you the peaks of Ben——” It was vain to assure him that we saw quite enough, and that the light upon the prospect was all that could be desired. He still repeated disconsolately: “Oh, had it been the morn now!” And then he suggested that we should go to the top of the Nelson monument, which is only about a hundred and fifty feet high. But Mrs. Gillies looked so horrified at the suggestion that he hastily withdrew it and called our attention to the so-called national monument, which consists of a row of Ionic columns crowned by an architrave, intended originally to be completed as a reproduction of the Parthenon, in honour of Wellington’s victories. “And there’s many think,” added the guide, “that it’s weel it went no further,” an opinion to which we heartily give an adhesion. “For what’s the use of it?” asked Mrs. Gillies practically. “Weel, madam,” said the guide, “the idee was to use it as a Walhalla.” “And what’s a Walhalla?” asked Mrs. Gillies innocently. “Weel, madam, as far as I can make out it was just a place where they drank bluid out of skulls.”

After this a rapid descent over the grassy slopes, where there is a notice warning people that they can only put out linen to dry on certain parts of the hill—a notice that suggests a certain simplicity of manners still existing in Midlothian—over the grassy slopes, and down past the high school, where the boys’ school-books are resting in little packages on the window-ledge, and then into the Burns’ monument, a funny little temple, just big enough to hold the curator, his desk, and sundry trifling relics of Burns. Interesting, however, are sundry letters and autographs of Burns in the firm yet flourishing eighteenth century hand, and one of his old excise lists showing that he could gauge auld wives’ barrels as well as any other excise-man. But this is just a diversion en passant, for the ultimate aim of our walk is Holyrood. And so we pass among breweries, and through dirty-looking slums, till we reach a certain mark in the roadway which denotes we have reached the

sanctuary of Holyrood—a sanctuary available only for debtors, but in itself a curious survival of an ancient custom.

But we have been too early on the wing, for the palace does not open till eleven, and so gaze at the Highlander pacing up and down on sentry with saddened feelings. The place is rather dreary with its gritty esplanade, where no living thing is moving, and its fountain that never plays. But there is the green mountain close behind it, and the rocky terraces of the crags with the winding path leading up its side, that Walter Scott once loved to pace over—and why not we?

But half-way up to the crags a rattling shower comes on, and we race back over stocks and stones, and take shelter in the royal guard-chamber, almost startling the gallant Highlanders into turning out in our honour. Mrs. Gillies, by the way, does not share in these vagaries; she had seen Holyrood when she was young, and does not wish to weaken the impression she then received. Uncle Jock has taken the same line, and Jennie and I are left alone. But the girl is out of spirits. She has no fun left in her, and my liveliest sallies excite only a faint wan smile. "Is it because Lubin is away?" I ask sarcastically and a little savagely, that she is so "down in the mouth."

At this Jennie shows sparks of fire, and we enter Holyrood House as far apart as the nature of things permits, and then comes the necessity for the inevitable "saxpences," which paid, we are free of what are called the historical apartments. And in these the whole interest of the building is concentrated, or rather in the one ancient tower, which was spared during the rebuilding of the palace in the reign of Charles the Second, and still remains almost in the same condition as when it was occupied by Queen Mary—a square substantial tower, flanked by corner turrets, which are crowned by French-looking pepper-box roofs.

A thin but constant stream of visitors is filing in, passing through the corridors and ascending the stairs. There is first a picture-gallery to see, decorated with portraits—fanciful ones—of the kings of Scotland downwards from the very obscurest ages, nearly all painted, it seems, by the same industrious hand. Some good country folk are going through them all industriously, with the idea that they are improving their minds in thus forming an acquaintance with the physiognomy of

their early kings. Others seated in the windows are looking curiously out upon the inner quadrangle, and speculating as to the number of rooms contained in the big barrack-like buildings, and as to the room where the queen may sleep on her rare visits to the palace.

And then a flight of stone steps brings us to the lower set of rooms in the tower, which were once occupied by Darnley. And here the interest begins, for leading from the closet below is a secret stair cut in the thickness of the walls that leads directly into the bedroom of Queen Mary overhead. Below, the stair is reached by a door communicating with a private entrance to the Chapel Royal, and it was by this door that the conspirators were admitted by Darnley, on the dreadful night of Rizzio's murder. There is an excellent portrait of Darnley in his early youth hanging in the bed-chamber. "He looks a silly young gowk," observes a stout-looking farmer from the Lothians; but besides the weakness and sensuality in the face, there is a considerable element of cruelty. On the next floor the rooms are arranged upon the same plan, but decorated with greater richness as befitting their royal occupant. The ceiling is divided into panels, and adorned with carved and gilded arms and monograms—Mary's own, and that of her first husband, Francis the Second of France, being the most interesting. In the outer or audience chamber there is a fine open fire-place, and a grate of the period, where the queen must often have sat in the chilly nights of a Scotch winter, and longed to be back in the sunny land of France. And then passing through into the bed-chamber you see the bed with its faded hangings, a morsel of the queen's sheet still upon the bed, the room all hung with tapestry, a corner of which drawn up reveals the fatal door that was opened by her husband to let in the band of ruffianly assassins. Close to this door is the little turret chamber where Mary was supping, in the gay friendliness she loved, with Rizzio and her attendants.

"What a wretch he must have been, that Darnley," cries Jennie, who has taken in all the scene and realised the details of the tragedy; "and Mary was quite right to have him killed, don't you think so?" But on this point I decline to commit myself.

But a visit to Holyrood would not be complete without an examination of the exact spot where Rizzio was finally despatched, and where the noted blood-

stains are said to be visible. And, indeed, there are still stains on the floor, which seems to have been scraped and chopped with the notion of removing them; but the place is dark and gloomy, and the little knot of sightseers constantly gathered about it prevent any minute examination.

While we were looking at the reputed blood-stains, I felt Jennie quiver violently as she stood beside me, and there with a sketch-book in his hand, taking some details of the interior, was young Ronald, looking provokingly handsome and dangerously melancholy. He started too when he saw us, and flushed rather guiltily.

"I thought you were going to the Highlands at once!" said Jennie rather reproachfully.

"Well, yes, so I was," rejoined Ronald in some confusion; "but the fact was—well, I changed my mind."

"But you can do no good here, Ronald," said Jennie impatiently.

"Oh yes, I can," said Ronald. "I am meditating a figure picture. Something with Mary in it, of course."

Jennie shook her head impatiently.

"Stick to your landscapes, Ronald, and don't waste your time."

Ronald joined us, and we sauntered into the Chapel Royal, a melancholy ruin, itself but a fragment of the old abbey, the bulk of which has been gradually pulled down to make room for the palace. The Scotch say the English destroyed it in one of their incursions, but then the Scotch are very fond of attributing such things to the English, just as the vergers of our cathedrals are always ready with "Cromwell's soldiers." A melancholy ruin it is, the area covered with a sad-looking grass plat strewn with grave-stones. In one corner is a square rough block of masonry, with a grating, and a rusted padlock, green slime on the damp flags within, and here rests the royal line of Scotland.

From Holyrood we go up to the Canon-gate, with its ancient houses dark and high, winding upwards under one name or another to the foot of the castle-rock, and here we meet Uncle Jock, who is looking up the old places he remembered as a boy, to find them mostly removed. But there is John Knox's house, quaint and gabled, and an old woman sitting on the outside steps who might be Jennie Geddes, who threw her cutty stool at the bishop. When we have passed the house, a bare-legged lad comes running after us and cries:

"Man, here's an auld bodie wants to speak wi' thee." It is Uncle Jock who is wanted, and it is Jennie Geddes who volubly pours into his ear a tale of how she came from the Heelands, and reared a large family, and that surely the laird would give her a trifle, and Jock, much gratified at being recognised as a Heeland laird, after so many years of St. Mary Axe, graciously puts his hand in his pocket. And he asks Ronald very graciously to spend the rest of the day with us, at which I can see that Jennie's heart rejoices, and we wander back towards the hotel by the castle mound. When suddenly from among the grey walls, and green patches, and hoary rocks, a white puff of vapour shoots forth, and a deafening report follows that makes us all skip into the air.

"Hech, it's just the one o'clock gun," said Uncle Jock, laughing.

For in this sensational manner do they announce this important hour in Auld Reekie.

RED MICK'S SHEELAH.

A FAIRY TALE.

"WHAT is she, thon handsome crathur o' a little girl?" asked a Milford woman of a Fannet man at the Tamney Fair one summer evening in the year 1805.

The man turned to look at a beautiful tall girl, whose golden hair hung in a wavy mantle upon her shoulders, and who seemed to attract more attention than any other woman at the fair.

Many a pretty bright-eyed damsel, with sturdy erect figure and rosy cheeks, transacted her business at the stalls, and coquetted with her rustic admirers; but the tall golden-haired girl, though much handsomer, spoke only to one young man.

"Sure, that's just Red Mick's Sheelah, an' the bonniest girl in all the countryside," returned the Fannet man.

"What is he, the boy that's wi' her?" proceeded the inquisitive woman.

"That's Red Mick's Dan, an' 'tis said he keeps all sweethearts awa' frae the sister—he's that constant by her side. Dear knows they're gude till ane anither, an' to the father an' mother too."

The brother and sister who had excited so much interest continued to keep together until they left the fair, and when the red-cloaked belles began to mount their shaggy ponies behind father, brother, or sweetheart, and climb the hilly road that almost overhung the waters of Mulroy, they also

mounted their rough steed, and Sheelah, putting her arm round Dan's waist, clung to him for support as they jogged along.

Many were the friendly greetings exchanged as the different couples passed them, some of the young people joking Sheelah upon her fancy for Dan's escort on all occasions.

"Was there ever a boy at the fair you'd ha' spoken to, Sheelah dear, if I hadna been wi' you?" asked the brother at length, as if the gibes of his neighbours had made him uneasy.

"Never a one, Dan avick. There never was sweetheart or husband yet that wad do for girl or wife what you'll do for me," replied the low silvery voice at his ear.

"An' what 'ill that be, Sheelah dear, more nor I do for you at the present time?"

"Deed, Dan, I dinna know rightly, but it 'ill be something bye-ordinary. I had a dream about it Friday was eight days. See—see!" cried she, interrupting her story, and trembling. "See that grey woman at the turn o' the road!"

They had reached a sharp bend in the path. At their left lay the lake, studded with green and rocky islands, rocks shelving down from the narrow road to the edge of the water, and bold mountains rising up at the further side.

Seals that had basked in the sun upon the islands all day long plunged into the lough now that the sun was set; sea-gulls floated upon the wavelets, and the plover gave their wild cry, circling overhead.

"Grey woman! She has turned into a stone, Sheelah."

"So she has, Dan honey;" and Sheelah peered curiously at the block of granite by the roadside—merely a grey stone, festooned with wreaths of bramble, woodbine, convolvulus, and wild roses.

They rode on in silence until they reached the Fairy Glen, a chasm in the mountains, down which trickled a stream, overhung by wych-elm, hawthorn, and more festoons of woodbine. When the young pair were near this glen they quickened their pace. They had been brought up to believe that it was inhabited by powerful but unfriendly beings, never visible to mortal eye except on May Eve and Hallowe'en.

As for Sheelah, she trembled excessively, and held her brother more tightly while she said:

"Dinna speak again, Dan honey, till we're out o' the glen."

"But I didna speak ava, Sheelah."

"You're laughing at me, Dan. If it wasna you that said, 'Bonnie Sheelah—purty Sheelah!' wha was it?"

"Troth, girl, I didna open my mouth, good nor bad," replied Dan in a vexed and puzzled tone.

"There it is again, Dan," and she shivered still more. "It's like a wheen, clear, wee voice, and ilka ane o' them is saying, 'Purty Sheelah—bonnie Sheelah!'"

"Whisht, whisht, girl! I hear naething ava but the purling o' the burn owre the stanes. Say a pater an' ave. The blessed Virgin an' all the saints defend us! Holy Mary be between us an' harm!"

While Dan prayed he belaboured the shaggy steed with his blackthorn cudgel, and they were soon beyond the unholy precincts. A mile further they came in sight of their home, a snug farmhouse on the side of the hill, with well-cultivated fields stretching down to the Lough.

Red Mick's father had planted the three apple-trees that were now covered with a veil of pink-tinged snow; and his own hands and Dan's had reclaimed the potato-grounds, and, aided by his beautiful daughter, had planted the crop that in even green rows gave such fair promise.

The mother milked the cow, made the butter, and cooked, and always had the hearth bright and inviting when her dear trio came in from work.

She and Red Mick—so called from the colour of his hair—were at the cottage-door to welcome their children home from the fair.

When Sheelah was gone to bed, Dan told his parents about the voices she had heard in the Fairy Glen. They were greatly startled.

"She is a handsome little girl, sure enough. God send the 'gentry' hasna set their hearts on her," said they, shaking their heads and muttering paters and aves just as Dan had done in the glen.

A great and inexplicable change came over Sheelah from that day forth. She used to sing songs at her work; now her pleasant voice was hushed. Her smile had brightened the house; now she was sad and preoccupied, though diligent and dutiful as ever.

It happened about this time that Mrs. O'Donoghue received a large order for spun yarn, which in those days was a very well paid industry, and Sheelah sat spinning all day long.

Her mother, who sat opposite at her wheel, noticed that her fair daughter sighed heavily from time to time and said, "Oh, I wish Friday was by!"

"An' why do you wish Friday was by, Sheelah dear?" asked the poor woman anxiously.

"I dinna know rightly," replied the girl, sighing again and going on with her spinning more industriously than ever.

Two Fridays passed away without anything happening that might seem in any way to account for Sheelah's terror; but on the third, towards evening, a number of voices were heard, as if outside the house, calling:

"Sheelah! Pretty Sheelah! Bonnie Sheelah!"

Mrs. O'Donoghue stopped her wheel to look at her daughter, who, giving a heavier sigh than before, got up and went to the window.

She was absent about five minutes. She then returned quietly and sat down to spin as though nothing extraordinary had occurred.

"Sheelah dear, what is it ails you?" asked the terrified mother.

"Naething ails me, mother—naething ava."

"But who was calling you, dear, an' what did they want wi' you?"

To this question the girl would not give any reply whatsoever.

Next morning the parents were awakened by a dreadful cry.

Dan, come down from his bedroom on the loft to call his father and sister to their work, and going first to Sheelah's bedside, had found her dead and cold, with her lovely golden hair lying in loose masses all over the pillow. Her blue eyes were closed, her fair face settled into statuesque repose.

The grief of father, mother, and brother was intense and bitter, and their sole comfort was to give her a very fine funeral. There was a magnificent wake, at which a quantity of whisky was drunk, and much tobacco smoked, all to do honour to the poor dead beauty; while the company went one by one into the room, to uncover her face and remark, "Dear, but she's the bonnie corpse."

Then the day came when the sad procession had to set forth along the wild mountain road, and Sheelah was buried at Massmount in the graveyard close to the Lough, while the keening arose in mournful waves of sound, and the bell was tolled,

and the plover added their almost human cry as requiem.

The O'Donoghues went sorrowfully back to a lonely house, but the farm work had to go on as usual though Sheelah could not help any longer, and the mother was now obliged to lock up the house, and accompany Red Micky and Dan into the fields. But she was too stiff for the labour; her bones ached, and so did her heart. One very sultry day she was employed in helping her husband and son to pull their flax. She felt weak and tired, and straightening herself with difficulty burst into tears as she exclaimed:

"If you were here, Sheelah dear, it's not pulling lint I'd be the day."

"Mother, you maun quit working—you're sair fatigued," said Dan.

"Na, na; I'll no quit working, but I wish I had a drink o' milk."

"Weel, mother, gie me the key o' the door, an' I'll awa to the house an' get you the milk."

Dan climbed the hill very slowly, thinking sorrowfully of his dead sister all the way. On entering the house he was astonished to see a woman standing at the dresser with her back towards the door. She had long golden hair that streamed over her shoulders, but almost before Dan's heart had time to bound at the sight of that hair, she turned round and showed the face of Sheelah.

"Is it you, Sheelah?" he stammered, advancing a step, and stretching out his arms.

She shrunk back.

"Dinna put a hand on me—dinna touch me for your life, Dan dear, but listen to what I'm going to say to you, an' maybe you'll be able to win me back. They took me" (here she dropped her voice and shuddered), "an' you buried something like me that they put in my place."

"I'll win you back, Sheelah," cried the young man. "Aye, sister jewel, I'll win you back."

"It'll tak' you to be brave an' strong, Dan; but I know weel that you love me, an' you'll be brave for my sake. Dinna you be telling my father an' mother that you seen me; let them still think I'm dead an' buried."

"Ah, Sheelah, they're breaking their hearts about you."

"Listen to me, Dan. On Hallowe'en night, when the moon's up, you'll gae down to the third gap in the hedge o' my father's lint field, an' stand there till you hear us

riding by. You'll see us all as weel as hear us, an' you'll let the red horse an' the black horse pass you, but the third will be a white horse, an' I'll be on him, an' you'll pull me off, an' hold me fast. It may be," she continued, "that they'll turn me into different shapes to frighten you, but dinna let me go, for if you do, an' they get me awa' wi' them again, they'll be sure to kill me, an' you'll see my blood at your door-stane. Now, Dan dear, I dare na stop wi' you any longer—let me awa'."

Dan became very thoughtful after this interview. His grief for his sister was changed into a kind of awe, and a longing for, yet dreading of Hallowe'en.

When he had to drive his father's flax-laden carts through the Fairy Glen on his way to the mill, he was filled with strange thoughts. Was it there that his fair sister was leading her mysterious existence? Should he be able to break the spell that had been strong enough to lure a dutiful maiden from her home? That she now hated the fairy palaces was quite clear to him, for her blue eyes had looked so sad and wistful.

Hallowe'en came. The poor parents were mourning more than ever for their lost child as they sat silently by the hearth, the mother dropping quiet tears upon the knitting in her hand, the father smoking and staring listlessly into the fire, while Dan was just as silent, brooding over his coming adventure. At last he got up, and took his cap from the nail.

"Where are you going?" asked his mother.

"Down to the barn at Shovelin's for a wee while; the boys got a promise frae me."

"What!" she cried reproachfully. "Sure you wouldna' be for going to a dance, an' your sister not three months in her grave?"

Dan could not excuse himself, he must be contented to bear the imputation of forgetfulness of the dead for a short time.

So he went to the third gap in the flax field, and stood there listening very intently; but the distant roll of the Atlantic beating the shore with its surf was almost the only sound he heard. He peered around him anxiously, but nothing seemed to stir; the moonlight made familiar trees, stones, and hedges look grotesque. He then felt for his prayer-book, which he had put into his coat-pocket. Its very touch reassured him.

After many minutes, which appeared to him like hours, a trampling was heard like

that of hoofs. Nearer and nearer it came. How Dan's heart beat! Yes. There came a red horse, sure enough, ridden by a quaint figure, wearing a three-cornered cocked hat. Then came the black horse, carrying some one dressed in a cloak. Dan recalled Sheelah's words and let them both pass, but when the white horse was passing the gap, he dashed forward, and dragging its rider off, held something, he could not tell what, in his arms.

For the thing he grasped was very like a cock; it crowed, it fought with beak and spurs; he felt its feathers; but he thought of his dear Sheelah, and he held firm.

Next moment he seemed to have a bar of red-hot iron in his hands. Sores were he tempted to let it fall, but what signified burnt hands in Sheelah's cause? He held on, and found that there was no heat in what he grasped.

A snake next twined and twisted itself about his arms, hissing fiercely. Still he kept up his courage for Sheelah's sake.

The last and most terrible appearance she assumed was that of a tiger. Poor Dan felt as if he could not hold the writhing fighting creature, and in his despair sunk his teeth deeply into its shoulder, resolved to be faithful to Sheelah or die.

The trial was over. He heard the fairy troop ride away, and found his sister in his arms.

With much difficulty he managed to stagger home, and lay his dear burden down before the fire.

"Ax nae questions, father an' mother," he cried, "but bring a drop of spirits quick; we maun try to bring her to."

When the warmth and the refreshment revived the poor girl, and she opened her blue eyes upon her dear parents and brother Dan, who had done for her more than lover or husband would have done, the scene was one of wild agitation.

Her mother shuddered and clasped her to her heart, as she told of the hated thralldom from which she had escaped. The tale of wonder was easily believed, for it was well known that the fairy people often set their affections upon beautiful girls, or handsome children, and wiled them away from their friends.

The O'Donoghues had frequently trembled by the winter hearth while they listened to such recitals; the terror was now become most real.

"But you're quite safe wi' us now, Sheelah darlint," they cried; "once won

back from them, they'll never try their power over you again."

Sheelah lived to be married and to have a large family. The present writer was told the story by a very old woman, who in her childhood had known Sheelah well, and had often seen the mark of Dan's teeth in her arm—a mark she carried to her grave.

HOPE'S TRAGEDY.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

ON a mild afternoon in winter, in a large room facing the sea, four people were engaged in talking about an absent person. To speak literally, three were talking and one was listening, almost in spite of herself it seemed, for her face was turned away towards a window, and she looked haughty, displeased, and a very little confused. She was a woman of eight or nine and twenty, but looking younger, with a fine figure and handsome features, and an air of fashion and distinction. The two people by the fire were her mother and brother, and they were entertaining a visitor, a boyish young clergyman, with a sweet and rather puzzled countenance. Mrs. Hamilton did most of the talking; her son, standing on the hearth-rug, asked a leading question now and then. He was not a very pleasant-looking man, with watchful eyes that were sometimes permitted to steal a quick glance at his sister, and white teeth that now and then gleamed suddenly under his moustache, with the effect of a rather malicious smile.

"A bank clerk! You'll excuse us, of course—he's your friend—and it's not a bad compliment to say that we took him for something more than that," said Mrs. Hamilton agreeably.

"Well, I don't wonder, really. He does give one the idea of a rich fellow," replied the curate. "But, after all, Mrs. Hamilton, it's no disgrace to be in a bank, you know. Men are glad to get anything to do nowadays."

"Yes, poor men. But your friend took us all in, Mr. West. He was staying with you for a few days, wasn't he, when he first came down? Yes, of course, because you introduced him to lots of people. After you went, Mr. Hope established himself at the Royal Hotel, and there he lives like a prince. Everybody asks him, and for the last month or six weeks he has been the young man of Beachcliff. Old Lady Ash-

bury is charmed with him—asking him to all her parties as an attraction for other young people. There never was such a trusting community."

"But why not? Why shouldn't they? Hope is as nice a fellow as ever lived."

"Oh yes; that's not the question. People are not made a fuss with in society, simply because they are nice. They must have something, you know, to give them a claim. Either family, or money, or something. And you seem to imply that Mr. Hope is nobody, and has nothing."

Mr. West, with his eyes fixed on his hat, appeared to be thinking over the attributes of his friend; were there any that would pass current with the disappointed Mrs. Hamilton?

"Well, I'm sorry," he began rather slowly. "Hope is not rich, certainly. He ought to be, for he has a good idea of spending money."

"A common talent with poor men," said Julius Hamilton from the rug.

Mr. West laughed. "And I suppose his family is nothing particular," he went on. "One doesn't think so much of all that at college—at least we didn't."

"The sentimental period—you are hardly out of it yet," said Mr. Hamilton pleasantly. "Where do his people live?"

"Somewhere in Kingston, not far from Richmond Park, you know."

"I suppose you don't know them?"

"I went down with him one day, two or three years ago. Well—nice quiet people."

"A large family?"

"Oh no; mother and sister. Everything very neat, you know—they gave us tea."

He looked from Mrs. Hamilton to Julius. Both were smiling—she in a forced uncomfortable manner, he with broad frank amusement, mixed with ill-nature; but Julius Hamilton never smiled without a sneer. The young curate's gentle spirit was seized with rage and hatred. He hated these people for their impertinence, their scorn of dear old Willie Hope; but he hated himself still more to think how weakly he had stood up for him. He got up in a hurried manner, resolved to warn his friend that Beachcliff was peopled by snobs, and that he had better go and spend the rest of his sick-leave somewhere else. It would not be agreeable to wait till all these houses shut their doors on him.

"What is it that puts the Hamiltons in such a special rage?" he wondered as he went out of the house, glad to breathe the

salt air and look out across the gleaming sea in the twilight. "They surely did not think of him for Miss Hamilton. She was very silent just now, but then she had not a chance to speak. Why, she must be years older than Hope—not at all his kind of girl, besides. Here he is! Well, old fellow, how are you?"

The two old friends met very cordially, though after the first moment there was something hurried and confused in Willie Hope's manner, and he looked vaguely over his friend's shoulder, as if his interest lay somewhere beyond. The mistake made by Beachcliff society had been very natural. Hope was a very attractive young man, with pleasant expressive eyes and a charming smile. He walked and held himself remarkably well, too, and with an air of agreeable confidence which, from Mrs. Hamilton's point of view, was certainly unpardonable. A passing observer would have said that young Hope was well-born, well-bred, rich, and happy. He was set up with that polished roughness which second-rate people never understand. The only fault which a critical person could have found was not in his appearance, but in what signified less, a look in his eyes, light and wavering, never to be seen in the eyes of a sensible strong-natured man. Mr. West wanted his friend to turn back with him along the Parade, to come home with him and stay to dinner. He was eagerly anxious to save Hope from the cold shoulder that awaited him, as soon as Mrs. Hamilton should spread her discoveries. But he could not explain himself out here—it would be a dreadful thing to explain at any time—and Hope was evidently in a state of impatience. He would not promise anything, or accept any invitations. He could not remember whether he was engaged.

"Come, are you so gay as that?" remonstrated Mr. West. "Where are you off to now, for instance?"

"The Hamiltons. It's getting late; good-bye!" said Hope, already beginning to walk away.

"Why do you go there? Don't go there!" exclaimed the curate, seizing his arm.

"Why not, pray?" said Hope, and looking at him in great surprise, for he had spoken very earnestly.

This was a difficulty. After a moment's thought, young West saw that he must draw back for the present.

"What do you mean? Don't you like

them? They are the most charming people here," said Hope in a hasty, fiery manner. "They have been awfully good to me."

"Julius Hamilton is the most odious brute——" began West, seeing that he must give some explanation.

"Well, I can understand your not liking him—he's satirical. I like satirical people. One only wants a conviction that they are laughing at somebody else, and then one can enjoy their vinegar. Good-bye. I'll look in to-morrow."

Off he walked, and his friend made no further effort to detain him. "He will hardly find his Hamiltons agreeable this evening," he thought grimly, as he went on his way.

There was some excuse for Mr. Hope's excitement and elation. No later than the end of the first fortnight of his stay at Beachcliff, the world had begun to smile and look knowing, having noticed that where Dora Hamilton was, there young Hope was pretty sure to appear; and from that time this flirtation had gone on in a most decided manner. People were a little surprised, and thought Mr. Hope might have done better. Miss Hamilton was certainly older than he was, had had several disappointments, and was no catch at all in the way of fortune. People said, too, that Julius Hamilton was a speculating, dangerous fellow, besides being horribly disagreeable. But Mr. Hope and Miss Hamilton did not trouble themselves about these neighbourly opinions. They both looked very happy, and the watchful mother and brother did not interfere. They were waiting for Mr. West's return, when they expected to find out everything about Mr. Hope's fortune and prospects. So the blow fell heavily when his friend confessed that these were less than nothing.

Dora Hamilton remained sitting by the fire with a sore heart when Mr. West was gone, and her mother and Julius had left the room. She now understood why Willie Hope had never yet said quite as much as she expected of him; of course, poor fellow, he was shy of asking a girl to marry him—a girl brought up as she had been—when he had nothing to offer her but a bank-clerk's salary! What was that? something too impossibly ridiculous, she believed. She saw that she must give him up, and she felt both sore and savage; angry with him and sorry for herself, for besides being more than a little in love with him, she was tired of living at home and being teased by Julius.

It was in this state of mind that Hope

found her when he came in that afternoon, happy in the prospect of a fire-light talk, and delighted beyond measure at finding her alone. Knowing nothing of what had passed, he could not at all understand the change in her manner. She was cold and distant, spoke to him in quite a strange voice, and would hardly look at him. After a few minutes he began to realise that something serious was the matter, that a crisis had arrived unexpectedly. That morning on the Parade she had been all smiles, encouraging him so far that it only seemed necessary for him to decide how and when he should speak to her seriously, and ask her whether she could really care for a poor fellow like him. With a radiant smile he told himself that her answer was a certainty, and yet deep in his heart there was a lurking fear. He knew that he was something of an impostor among all these people; that his present way of living did not come quite so naturally as they imagined—but in Dora Hamilton's presence who could degrade himself by thinking of such disagreeable sordid truths as these? Certainly not a boyish enthusiast like Mr. William Hope. But if he was easily elated, he was easily cast down too, and her manner this evening gave him a good excuse for being miserable. First he dropped into silence, looking at her with piteous eyes—for he could not talk about nothing, and pretend not to care; then as she leaned back, turning her face away from him, and keeping silence, too, he ventured to lay his hand on hers for a moment. She drew hers away instantly, but said nothing.

"Are you angry? What have I done?" murmured the young man.

"You must not; I don't like it. I don't know what you mean by saying that," replied Miss Hamilton rather incoherently.

"You must know that you are making me most awfully miserable," said Hope. "What is it? Has something vexed you? You know I would jump into the sea sooner than vex you."

For a minute she gave him no answer. She was very fond of him in her way, and it was not so easy, now that he was here, to hold to her stern resolution of giving him up at once. Something in his voice just then added to her conviction of his love for her, and made it seem almost possible to give up her rich home and live with him on nothing.

Poor Dora! she was in a great difficulty, and perhaps she was not altogether sorry

to hear a door shutting in the distance, which meant that Julius was coming upstairs.

"I have been vexed, but I can't tell you how," she said, turning to him now with a shadow of her old smile. "Another time, perhaps. There's Julius coming. Don't look tragical or say anything before him, and don't stay long, please—to oblige me."

"But when shall I see you again? I have something most particular to say to you."

"I don't know—well, I may go towards the pier with Boney to-morrow morning."

Then Julius came in, and after a few minutes of commonplace talk, Hope got up and went away.

As soon as he was gone, Mr. Hamilton attacked his sister.

"You mean to make a fool of yourself, I suppose, by marrying a pauper. I wish you joy. You had better be married in London, not here; it will be more convenient for his relations, and besides, one's friends here might not appreciate them;" with a good deal more of the same sort, all said in a low quiet voice, and with Julius's peculiar smile.

Dora sat and stared into the fire; she hardly seemed to be listening. At last she started up impatiently.

"What a bore you are, Julius! I wish you would not try to domineer over me. I don't care what you say. I would marry him, but of course it is impossible without your consent and mamma's. I know that. I am not a baby, to fancy that one can live on nothing. As for his friends, I dare say they are much better people than any we know."

"Nice quiet people West says," sneered Julius.

"You may laugh, but I am very unhappy," said his sister, standing and looking at him with her hand on the mantelpiece.

"Poor old girl! are you really?" said Julius in a different tone. "Well, of course that adds to the awkwardness. You like the creature, and he knows it. The fiasco serves him right, but still there may be a way out of the mess, if he is equal to it."

"What way?" said Dora wearily.

"I'll tell you—but mind, it is my ultimatum. If he can't take my suggestion, you must have nothing more to do with him. If he can, you may do as you please. Sit down and listen."

CHAPTER II.

IT was a fresh breezy morning, with long white sunbeams flashing out now and then over a grey tossing sea. The waves were springing high up against the seawall, and the spray was flying in showers. Sometimes a sudden spurt of rain came darting from the hurrying clouds overhead. There were not many people out that stormy morning. Far out at the end of the pier, quite careless of weather and spray, Mr. Hope and Miss Hamilton were having their explanation at last.

They had the pier to themselves, and could not be seen from the parade, being quite sheltered by the pavilion, where the band played on fine days. Only Boney, a fat, old, philosophic pug, sat by and gravely watched his mistress. She stood gazing out across the troubled sea, which suited her feelings very well that morning. Sometimes she was obliged to give a look and smile to her lover, who was leaning against the parapet with his back to the sea, and his eyes on her face, but she was doing her best to be very calm and sensible, and keep him so. She had allowed him to tell her all he felt and all he wished. That was not to be avoided. Then, without giving him any definite answer, she hinted something about prudence, and the difficulty of living at all in these days. Not intending to mention Mr. West's name, she wanted him to put her in the right by confessing all his circumstances.

"Julius said to me"—she hesitated—"that—that we did not know much about you. And, you know, I am quite dependent on him and mamma. I have nothing, except what they choose to allow me. So don't you think you had better give up the idea?" There was nothing for it but to be equally frank. Hope confessed that her brother was quite right: she would be doing an imprudent thing if she married him. He made a long speech and told her everything. To her it sounded a rather hopeless story, though the points of beauty in it, which she was quite capable of feeling, gave her little thrills of pain. He was a favourite child, with a self-denying generous mother, who had only cared that this long holiday of his should be spent as pleasantly as possible.

"I believe she would starve herself for me," said Hope in his eager manner. "I know people have been taking me for a swell, and I've sometimes felt ashamed, I

can assure you, especially when I thought of telling you all about it. There, now you see I'm desperate, or I should not have run the risk of making you despise me. But you must have known it all some day."

"I don't despise you. I am glad you have such a nice mother," said Dora graciously.

"Thank you. That's a weight off my mind."

After a minute or two she went on to make her confession, and now she withdrew her attention from the sea, and gave it all to him. She would not let him interrupt her by any exclamations or pleadings. She felt very serious and sad, for the young man attracted her strongly, and now that she had heard his story from himself, she did not see how Julius's plan was ever to be carried out. She began by telling him that she had been brought up extravagantly, that she could not do without a maid, and a great many other things that he had no idea of, being strangely innocent in the ways of rich women.

"Julius knows all that," she said, "and to tell you the truth, he was talking to me very seriously last night. I could not help minding what he said, because I knew it was all so true. He knows that it would be madness for me to marry a poor man. And you see—one's relations are made for that, I suppose—if one wishes to be mad, they won't let one."

"You wish it?"

"Don't—I didn't say so. I must tell you at once that I neither can nor will go against mamma and Julius."

"Then I may as well drown myself at once," said Hope, looking over the parapet.

"Don't be so impatient. Julius is not so unreasonable as you think. And yet," she said with a quick sigh, "I am afraid he is very unreasonable."

"Of course he is right to make a fuss about you. What did he say? He isn't quite opposed, then——"

"You understand that he attacked me about it," said Dora, colouring. "He thought he saw—he is quicker than most people."

"It didn't take much quickness, I fancy. Tell me what he said."

Miss Hamilton did not find this so easy. She made one or two attempts at beginning, and broke down in the middle of sentences. At last she sat down, clasping her hands and bending forward, in great trouble and confusion. She felt so sure that Julius's requirements would be the death-blow to this poor fellow's hopes, as well as to her own. Besides, the whole

thing seemed vilely mercenary. How could she have undertaken to make such a bargain with her lover! She had certainly exaggerated her own strength of mind.

"Oh, Willie!" she said, as he stood close by, looking down at her with tender anxiety, "I wish there was no such thing as money."

"So do I, darling. So does everybody who has got none. You might trust me to provide for you, if one could go out and shoot one's dinner. Never mind Julius now; let me talk to him."

"No, that won't do," she said, recovering herself. "I must not be so silly. This is what Julius says. He wants you to become a partner in his insurance office. You know all about it, don't you?"

"That marine affair: 'Sink or Swim!' Oh, does he?"

There was something odd and doubtful in Hope's voice, but not the despairing tone that Miss Hamilton had expected.

"How can that be?" he went on. "He will expect capital, of course. How much?" he went on quietly.

"He said ten thousand pounds would satisfy him, and that it would soon be doubled, and that after a year, if all was well, he would let me please myself, and in that case he and mamma would give me five hundred a year. He wants you, of course, to leave what you are doing now, and his idea is—which you won't like, I'm afraid—that you should go out to Suez and manage the branch which has just been started there. The man who was going there died not long ago, and Julius wants somebody who would be really interested in success, don't you see?"

"I see very well," replied Hope.

It was his turn now to gaze out at the horizon, and for the moment he seemed to have forgotten her presence. Her brother's proposal, which she had put into words with pain and difficulty, had had the oddest effect upon him; it had quieted him all at once. A grave, thoughtful, calculating look had come into his eyes; he evidently did not think the thing preposterous, as she did, though he might find it disagreeable. Dora Hamilton sat and watched him with a kind of fascinated anxiety, which after a few minutes became unbearable.

"Well," she said rather bitterly, "it is impossible, of course. Can't you say so! Do you expect to fish all that money out of the sea?"

He looked at her, still in an absent way, drew a long breath and answered slowly:

"I don't think it is impossible."

"You certainly are very odd," she said with a laugh.

"Am I? How! I haven't the money in my pocket. I can't rush straight to your brother, and pour it out before him."

"Now you are not speaking at all nicely," said she, getting up with an offended air. "If you really see your way to this, and if you are in earnest altogether, I should fancy you would be—rather pleased. Pray don't think that Julius cares—he only made the suggestion for my sake."

"And I, for your sake, would give a great deal more than my life is worth," said Hope sadly; these remarks had quite brought him to himself. "Great joy sobers one, don't you know. I suppose that's it. I was thinking how to put the thing in train at once. Forgive me for being so stupid."

"Yes, men are very dull; they can only think of one thing at a time," said Dora, but she smiled and forgave him.

Willie Hope ought to have been the happiest man on earth, and so he was, for he suddenly found himself in the position of an accepted lover, and the rest of that morning on the pier was not spent in talking about money matters. Miss Hamilton was charmed at the turn affairs were taking, and her influence over him was quite enough to make him forget any little misgivings, any doubts of the future. Those he kept to himself, only complaining to her of this dreadful year at Suez; but she knew that Julius would have his plan carried out to the letter, and did her best to reconcile him to it. After all, it was a good thing to see the world—and what was a year? Certainly a very short time in which to get everything one wanted.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XIX. MR. GREY GOES TO TRETTON.

MR. GREY went down to Tretton with a great bag of papers. In fact, though he told his daughter that he had to examine them all before he started, and had taken them to Fulham for that purpose, he had not looked at them. And, as another fact, the bag was not opened till he got home again. They had been read—at any rate, what was necessary. He knew his subject. The old squire knew it well. Mr. Grey was going down to Tretton not to convey facts or to explain the law, but in order that he might take the side either of the father or of the son. Mr. Scarborough had sent for the lawyer to support his view of the case; and the son had consented to meet him in order that he might the more easily get the better of his father.

Mr. Grey had of late learned one thing which had before been dark to him—had seen one phase of this complicated farrago of dishonesty which had not before been visible to him. Augustus suspected his father of some further treachery. That he should be angry at having been debarred from his birthright so long—debarred from the knowledge of his birthright—was, Mr. Grey thought, natural. A great wrong had been done him by his own father, or had been, at least, intended; and that such a man should resent it was to have been expected. But of late Mr. Grey had discovered that it was not in that way that the son's mind worked. It was not anger but suspicion that he showed; and he used his father's former treatment of him as a justification for the condemnation implied

in his thoughts. There is no knowing what an old man may do who has already acted as he had done. It was thus that he expressed himself both by his words and deeds, and did so openly in his father's presence. Mr. Grey had not seen them together, but knew from the letters of both of them that such was the case. Old Mr. Scarborough scorned his son's suspicions, and disregarded altogether any words that might be said as to his own past conduct. He was willing, or half willing, that Mountjoy's debts should be, not paid, but settled. But he was willing to do nothing towards such a step except in his own way. While the breath was in his body the property was his, and he chose to be treated as its only master. If Augustus desired to do anything by "post obits," let him ruin himself after his own fashion. "It is not very likely that Augustus can raise money by post obits circumstanced as the property is," he had written to Mr. Grey with a conveyed sneer and chuckle as to the success of his own villainy. It was as though he had declared that the money-lenders had been too well instructed as to what tricks Mr. Scarborough could play with his property to risk a second venture.

Augustus had in truth been awaiting his father's death with great impatience. It was unreasonable that a man should live who had acted in such a way and who had been so cut about by the doctors. His father's demise had in truth been promised to him, and to all the world. It was an understood thing, in all circles which knew anything, that old Mr. Scarborough could not live another month. It had been understood some time, and was understood at the present moment; and yet Mr. Scarborough went on living—no doubt as an invalid in the last stage of

probable dissolution, but still with the full command of his intellect and mental powers for mischief. Augustus, suspecting him as he did, had begun to fear that he might live too long. His brother had disappeared, and he was the heir. If his father would die—such had been his first thought—he could settle with the creditors immediately, before any tidings should be heard of his brother. But tidings had come. His brother had been seen by Mr. Hart at Monte Carlo, and though Mr. Hart had not yet sent home the news to the other creditors, the news had been sent at once to Augustus Scarborough by his own paid attendant upon his brother. Of Mr. Hart's "little game" he did not yet know the particulars. But he was confident that there was some game.

Augustus by no means gave his mother credit for the disgraceful conduct imputed to her in the story as now told by her surviving husband. It was not that he believed in the honesty of his mother, whom he had never known, and for whose memory he cared little; but that he believed so fully in the dishonesty of his father. His father, when he had thoroughly understood that Mountjoy had enveloped the property in debt, so that nothing but a skeleton would remain when the bonds were paid, had set to work, and by the ingenuity of his brain had resolved to redeem, as far as the Scarboroughs were concerned, their estate from its unfortunate position. It was so that Augustus believed. This was the theory existing in his mind. That his father should have been so clever, and Mr. Grey so blind, and even Mr. Hart and Mr. Tyrwhit so easily hoodwinked, was remarkable. But so it was—or might probably be so. He felt no assurance, but there was ever present to him the feeling of great danger. But the state of things as arranged by his father might be established by himself. If he could get these creditors to give up their bonds while his father's falsehood was still believed, it would be a great thing. He had learned by degrees how small a proportion of the money claimed had in fact been advanced to Mountjoy, and had resolved to confine himself to paying that. That might now probably be accepted with gratitude. The increasing value of the estate might bear that without being crushed. But it should be done at once, while Mountjoy was still absent and before Mr. Tyrwhit at any rate knew that Mountjoy had not been killed. Then had

happened that accidental meeting with Mr. Hart at Monte Carlo. That idiot of a keeper of his had been unable to keep Mountjoy from the gambling-house. But Mr. Hart had as yet told nothing. Mr. Hart was playing some game of his own, in which he would assuredly be foiled. The strong hold which Augustus had was in the great infirmity of his father and in the blindness of Mr. Grey; but it would be well that the thing should be settled. It ought to have been settled already by his father's death. Augustus did feel strongly that the squire ought to complete his work by dying. Were the story, as now told by him, true, he ought certainly to die, so as to make speedy atonement for his wickedness. Were it false, then he ought to go quickly, so that the lie might be effectual. Every day that he continued to live would go far to endanger the discovery. Augustus felt that he must at once have the property in his own hands so as to buy the creditors and obtain security.

Mr. Grey, who was not so blind as Augustus thought him, saw a great deal of this. Augustus suspected him as well as the squire. His mind went backwards and forwards on these suspicions. It was more probable that the squire should have contrived all this with the attorney's assistance than without it. The two, willing it together, might be very powerful. But then Mr. Grey would hardly dare to do it. His father knew that he was dying; but Mr. Grey had no such easy mode of immediate escape if detected. And his father was endowed with a courage as peculiar as it was great. He did not think that Mr. Grey was so brave a man as his father. And then he could trace the payment of no large sum to Mr. Grey—such as would have been necessary as a bribe in such a case. Augustus suspected Mr. Grey, on and off. But Mr. Grey was sure that Augustus suspected his own father. Now of one thing Mr. Grey was certain—Augustus was in truth the rightful heir. The squire had at first contrived to blind him—him, Mr. Grey—partly by his own acuteness, partly through the carelessness of himself and those in his office, partly by the subornation of witnesses who seemed to have been actually prepared for such an event. But there could be no subsequent blinding. Mr. Grey had a well-earned reputation for professional acuteness and honesty. He knew there was no need for such suspicions as those now entertained by the young

man; but he knew also that they existed, and he hated the young man for entertaining them.

When he arrived at Tretton Park he first of all saw Mr. Septimus Jones, with whom he was not acquainted. "Mr. Scarborough will be here directly. He is out somewhere about the stables," said Mr. Jones in that tone of voice with which a guest at the house—a guest for pleasure—may address sometimes a guest who is a guest on business. In such a case the guest on pleasure cannot be a gentleman, and must suppose that the guest on business is not one either.

Mr. Grey, thinking that the Mr. Scarborough spoken of could not be the squire, put Mr. Jones right. "It is the elder Mr. Scarborough whom I wish to see. There is quite time enough. No doubt Miss Scarborough will be down presently."

"You are Mr. Grey, I believe?"

"That is my name."

"My friend, Augustus Scarborough, is particularly anxious to see you before you go to his father. The old man is in very failing health you know."

"I am well acquainted with the state of Mr. Scarborough's health," said Mr. Grey, "and will leave it to himself to say when I shall see him. Perhaps to-morrow will be best." Then he rang the bell; but the servant entered the room at the same moment and summoned him up to the squire's chamber. Mr. Scarborough also wished to see Mr. Grey before his son, and had been on the alert to watch for his coming.

On the landing he met Miss Scarborough. "He does seem to keep up his strength," said the lady. "Mr. Merton is living in the house now, and watches him very closely." Mr. Merton was a resident young doctor, whom Sir William Brodrick had sent down to see that all medical appliances were at hand as the sick man might require them. Then Mr. Grey was shown in and found the squire recumbent on a sofa with a store of books within his reach, and reading apparatuses of all descriptions, and every appliance which the ingenuity of the skilful can prepare for the relief of the sick and wealthy.

"This is very kind of you, Mr. Grey," said the squire, speaking in a cheery voice. "I wanted you to come very much, but I hardly thought that you would take the trouble. Augustus is here, you know."

"So I have heard from that gentleman downstairs."

"Mr. Jones? I have never had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Jones. What sort of a gentleman is Mr. Jones to look at?"

"Very much like other gentlemen."

"I dare say. He has done me the honour to stay a good deal at my house lately. Augustus never comes without him. He is 'Fidus Achates,' I take it, to Augustus. Augustus has never asked whether he can be received. Of course it does not matter. When a man is the eldest son, and, so to say, the only one, he is apt to take liberties with his father's house. I am so sorry that in my position I cannot do the honours, and receive him properly. He is a very estimable and modest young man, I believe?" As Mr. Grey had not come down to Tretton either to be a spy on Mr. Jones, or to answer questions concerning him, he held his tongue. "Well, Mr. Grey; what do you think about it—eh?" This was a comprehensive question, but Mr. Grey well understood its purport. What did he, Mr. Grey, think of the condition to which the affairs of Tretton had been brought, and those of Mr. Scarborough himself and of his two sons? What did he think of Mountjoy, who had disappeared and was still absent? What did he think of Augustus, who was not showing his gratitude in the best way for all that had been done for him? And what did he think of the squire himself, who from his death-bed had so well contrived to have his own way in everything—to do all manner of illegal things without paying any of the penalties to which illegality is generally subject? And having asked the question he paused for an answer.

Mr. Grey had had no personal interview with the squire since the time at which it had been declared that Mountjoy was not the heir. Then some very severe words had been spoken. Mr. Grey had first sworn that he did not believe a word of what was said to him, and had refused to deal with the matter at all. If carried out Mr. Scarborough must take it to some other lawyer's offices. There had, since that, been a correspondence as to much of which Mr. Scarborough had been forced to employ an amanuensis. Gradually Mr. Grey had assented, in the first instance on behalf of Mountjoy, and then on behalf of Augustus. But he had done so in the expectation that he should never again see the squire in this world. He, too, had been assured that the man would die, and had felt that it would be better that the management of things

should then be in honest hands, such as his own, and in the hands of those who understood them, than be confided to those who did not understand them, and who might probably not be honest. But the squire had not died, and here he was again at Tretton as the squire's guest. "I think," said Mr. Grey, "that the less said about a good deal of it, the better."

"That, of course, is sweeping condemnation, which, however, I expect. Let that be all as though it had been expressed. You don't understand the inner man which rules me—how it has struggled to free itself from conventionalities. Nor do I quite understand how your inner man has succumbed to them and encouraged them."

"I have encouraged an obedience to the laws of my country. Men generally find it safer to do so."

"Exactly, and men like to be safe. Perhaps a condition of danger has had its attractions for me. It is very stupid, but perhaps it is so. But let that go. The rope has been round my own neck and not round that of others. Perhaps I have thought of late that if danger should come I could run away from it all, by the help of the surgeon. They have become so skilful now that a man has no chance in that way. But what do you think of Mountjoy and Augustus?"

"I think that Mountjoy has been very ill-used."

"But I endeavoured to do the best I could for him."

"And that Augustus has been worse used."

"But he at any rate has been put right quite in time. Had he been brought up as the eldest son he might have done as Mountjoy did." Then there came a little gleam of satisfaction across the squire's face as he felt the sufficiency of his answer. "But they are neither of them pleased."

"You cannot please men by going wrong, even in their own behalf."

"I'm not so sure of that. Were you to say that we cannot please men ever by doing right on their behalf you would perhaps be nearer the mark. Where do you think that Mountjoy is?" A rumour had reached Mr. Grey that Mountjoy had been seen at Monte Carlo, but it had been only a rumour. The same had in truth reached Mr. Scarborough, but he chose to keep his rumour to himself. Indeed, more than a rumour had reached him.

"I think that he will turn up safely," said the lawyer. "I think that if it were made

worth his while he would turn up at once."

"Is it not better that he should be away?" Mr. Grey shrugged his shoulders. "What's the good of his coming back into a nest of hornets. I have always thought that he did very well to disappear. Where is he to live if he came back? Should he come here?"

"Not with his gambling debts unpaid at the club."

"That might have been settled. Though indeed his gambling was as a tub that has no bottom to it. There has been nothing for it but to throw him over altogether. And yet how very much the better he has been of the two. Poor Mountjoy!"

"Poor Mountjoy!"

"You see, if I hadn't disinherited him I should have had to go on paying for him till the whole estate would have been squandered even during my lifetime."

"You speak as though the law had given you the power of disinheriting him."

"So it did."

"But not the power of giving him the inheritance."

"I took that upon myself. There I was stronger than the law. Now I simply and humbly ask the law to come and help me. And the upshot is, that Augustus takes upon himself to lecture me and to feel aggrieved. He is not angry with me for what I did about Mountjoy, but is quarrelling with me because I do not die. I have no idea of dying just to please him. I think it important that I should live just at present."

"But will you let him have the money to pay these creditors?"

"That is what I want to speak about. If I can see the list of the sums to be paid, and if you can assure yourself that by paying them I shall get back all the post obit bonds which Mountjoy has given, and that the money can be at once raised upon a joint mortgage, to be executed by me and by Augustus, I will do it. But the first thing must be to know the amount. I will join Augustus in nothing without your consent. He wants to assume the power himself. In fact, the one thing he desires is that I shall go. As long as I remain he shall do nothing except by my co-operation. I will see you and him to-morrow, and now you may go and eat your dinner. I cannot tell you how much obliged I am to you for coming." And then Mr. Grey left the room, went to his chamber, and in process of time made his way into the drawing-room.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

III.

A MIXTURE of sunshine and shower is the very best medium through which Edinburgh can be seen; yet when the sunshine is all shut out and the shower persists into a regular drenching downpour, it becomes a question whether Charing Cross would not be preferable. Uncle Jock begins to talk uneasily of a certain twenty minutes past nine train that will land him in time for business next morning, but is soundly rated by his female belongings for the proposed defection.

"We may rest awhile and be thankful we've seen so much," cries Mrs. Gillies, who has certain leanings towards a comfortable nap for the rest of the afternoon. But this thankful mood is not shared by the tourists who are thronging about us, lolling impatiently on sofas, or pacing the corridor with restless steps.

One old lady alone out of all the crowd is supremely content. She has finished her little tour and is going home, delighted, charmed—words cannot express her satisfaction with what she has seen.

"And what were ye most impressed with, mem?" asks Uncle Jock politely.

"Oh, the Cobbler," replies the old lady. "A mountain, my dear sir, that is for all the world like an old man mending shoes. I can't express the emotions caused by this wonderful scene."

"Mem," quoth Uncle Jock rather scornfully, "do you think it a fine thing to see a mountain like a man? Now, I would like to see a man that's like a mountain."

At this a wiry-looking American winked his eyes in the direction of Jock's stalwart figure. "Circumspice," he murmured, with a kind of sly allusion to Wren's monument in St. Paul's that set us all laughing, while Jock joined in very good-naturedly. And presently Uncle Jock was deep in the discussion with the said American and two Scotch sea-captains of the mysteries of Egyptian bondage and of the prospects of the "Soos Canawl."

But while the elders of the party were thus disposed of, the young people were not so contented. "I ought to be at work," said Ronald restlessly. "Indeed you ought," quoth Jennie severely. "But what could I do in this wretched weather?" urged Ronald. "You've got a fine big umbrella," replied Jennie. "But you can't work in the rain, Jennie," rejoined Ronald. "I'm thinking you don't

work over much in the fine, either," retorted Jennie with asperity. Jennie keeps all her tartness for Ronald, who is not too well pleased at it. Apparently, however, he profits by it, for as I am sitting in the smoking-room presently, disconsolately watching the people who are hurrying by in the wet, while a humid mist wraps up all distant objects, while in the valley below engines shriek and white clouds of steam rise up to mingle with the general reek, Ronald comes in to say good-bye. He is off now to set up his umbrella somewhere among the mountains and rocks, there to plant his easel, and set sail on the picture that is going to make a name for him and the beginning of a modest fortune, as well as falsify the croaking predictions of his best friends. And away goes Ronald, while Jennie, who has had her own way in the matter, and might be well pleased, you would think, wears such a woebegone face that it is quite sad to see her.

With the morning came rain, and still rain, and more rain after that. But by the afternoon it cleared up a little, and Jennie, who had also cleared up considerably, came and challenged me for a walk. First across a lofty bridge that spans the valley of railways, with glimpses of the castle glooming through the mist on one side, and Arthur's Seat, like a darker cloud than the rest, on the other, and then up flights of steps—oh, such heart-breaking steps—the dark tall houses frowning down upon us like so many cliffs, only brightened up by huge gilt-lettered signs, while as we make our way among narrow wynds and passages cut through the solid blocks of buildings, we come upon strange quaint scenes, sly grog-shops stowed away in obscure corners; little eating-houses and small grocery stores; but all with a general air at once squalid and depressing. And then we come out upon the High Street and St. Giles's church, that still retains a handsome coronal spire, but otherwise much modernised, and just now, as far as the interior is concerned, almost filled up with scaffoldings and workpeople—all in the way of restoration—pulling down the work of fifty years ago, to re-establish as far as may be that of five centuries gone.

Behind St. Giles's stands the Parliament House, where the Scottish Parliament met up to the date of the Union—now used as law-courts. But I don't think law-courts are particularly interesting to the outer world. Anyhow they did not much interest

us, and a gleam of sunshine just then darting across the wet flagstones, Jennie cried out, "Hey for the castle!" and so we started up the steep Lawn-market, which was a linen market once upon a time, and has nothing to do with turf.

It is a stiff pull up to the castle esplanade—a bare and rather untidy drill-ground, where two or three cabs are waiting, and sundry guides, who eye us enquiringly, but do not offer their services. The fact is they like to get hold of parties of five or six, with head money accordingly, and don't care to lose their turn for a solitary shilling. But except for the dignity of the thing a guide is a superfluous luxury. There is only one way to follow over the narrow drawbridge that crosses the moat, a deep cutting in the sloping talus of the rock, and through the outer defences—all of the most ancient and feeble order—till you come out upon an open gun platform known as the Argyle Battery. And here we naturally venture to look over the parapet. I fancy that Jennie even perched herself upon the carriage of a gun; and here we enjoyed the view of the new town and the Forth beyond, and the swelling hills of Fife, conscious all the while of a continuous shout of "Hi, hi, hi!" which we concluded to be some part of the mysteries of military drill. When we resumed our upward course, however, the shouts ceased. And so we pass through rock-cut passages, past the armoury, where a small crowd of soldiers in white fatigue dress are waiting to hand in each two or three damaged rifles; and then higher up, past barracks with more soldiers lounging, and still higher, where more of them are practising high jumps with leaping-poles, and so to the very highest point of the rocks, the highest and most sacred, where stands a little stone-built hut, which is perhaps the most ancient church in Scotland.

But just below, on the rocky platform, is an old friend still more familiar, no other than Mons Meg, the great gun of the fifteenth century, while even the rent in her venerable side is just two hundred years old, she having burst when firing a salute in honour of the future James the Second, or rather, as Jennie insists, here over the border, anyhow, he shall be, James the Seventh. But even Meg is forgotten in the sight of the magnificent view from the battery, the whole city spread at our feet, the wet roofs sparkling in the broken sunshine, with river and

mountain and distant sea, and a glorious canopy of massive clouds.

And while we are admiring the splendid panorama we hear once more the mysterious "Hi, hi!" and find that the sounds proceed from a corporal at our side, whose duty it seems to be to walk up and down for the protection of Mons Meg, while at the same time he has to guard the battery some fifty feet below, by voice, and by the energetic waving of his cane, from the intrusion of visitors. And as everybody who comes to visit the castle makes a point of stopping there and gazing over the parapet, the corporal is busy enough all the time.

From Mons Meg we turn again to the little stone hut just above—the ancient palladium, no doubt, of the city—which, according to tradition, was built as a votive chapel by a fair-haired Saxon saint, Margaret, the Queen of Malcolm—that Malcolm, son of Duncan, who appears in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and who thus acquires a certain interest in our eyes. And the fragment that remains of the ancient chapel, a rude Norman arch and a tiny semicircular apse, may well be of her time. It was this Margaret, by the way, who brought to Scotland as part of her dower—she was of the royal line, and kinswoman to Edward the Confessor—the sacred relic known as the black rood, or Holyrood, which contained a fragment of the true cross. As a fitting shrine for this her son David founded, it is said, the Abbey of Holyrood, whose ruined minster is now known as the Chapel Royal of the melancholy palace down below there.

Upon this rocky plateau, with the glorious view all round of sea and land, we could linger a long time. And the huge bulk of ancient Meg, with her little pyramids of granite balls lying about her, gives a central interest to the scene. It is a constant levée she holds, as groups of sightseers approach her, one after the other, eye her curiously and depart. She is built up very much after the fashion of a modern Armstrong gun, of welded ribs of iron with rings of the same metal shrunk over them, and the anatomy of her is plainly to be seen through the rent in her ancient side. There are enthusiastic Scots, by the way, who, in spite of the official record of the gun having been forged at Mons, in Flanders, claim the making of her for a certain mythical smith, one brawny Kim, with, of course, seven mythical sons; a tradition which brings us in contact with

the Douglas family, that famous race whose power for a time overshadowed that of Scotland's kings. For it was for the siege of Threave Castle, down south there by Kircudbright, a stronghold of Archibald the Grim, so say the traditions of Galloway, that the stout smith and his seven sons forged the great gun. While their hammers were thundering on its glowing sides, others at the top of Benham Hill close by were busy hewing the granite balls, and rolling them down as they were finished.

"But you'd have taken all the honours of Scotland away, and kept them if ye could," says an ancient warden. "There was the Holy Cross, ye got that still." Tradition says that this holyrood, which was lost to Scotland in the fourteenth century at the battle of Neville's Cross, and was long an object of veneration in the cathedral church of Durham, is still in existence; concealed, perhaps, with the holy relics of Saint Cuthbert, the secret of whose deposit, ever since the Reformation, has been in the hands of three Benedictine monks, renewed from time to time as death carries them away. So says tradition, and if ever the relics should be discovered, no doubt Scotland will put in a claim for her ancient rood. "And there was Mons Meg," continues the Scot reproachfully, "that you carted off to that Tower of yours in London, but that ye had to bring back again. And, moreover," the indictment gains in intensity, "there was the stone of destiny, the coronation throne of the Scottish kings, that ye still keep in Westminster Abbey, in spite of the faith o' treaties."

"All quite true," said Jennie benignly to the old man; "they are a deceitful race, the English."

"Indeed ye have the rights of it there, lassie, and dinna ye be deceivit with their glozing tongues," said the old man with a merry twinkle in his eye; "ye'll find brave lads enoo in Scotland."

Jennie turned up her nose contemptuously at the lads, whether English or Scotch, and we left the rooky summit in search of what the official guide-book terms "that singularly stirring and grand display—the Crown Room," which is within a kind of barrack square, the site of an ancient palace, but as commonplace now as St. George's Barracks or Knightsbridge. And here in a singularly bare and dismal room are exhibited under a wire cage the ancient regalia of Scotland, the so-called honours of the kingdom, the crown,

the sceptre, and the sword of state, rather shabby-looking insignia, bearing about them traces of the vicissitudes they have gone through. For to say nothing of their narrow escape from the "republicans and regicides of England," when they escaped the searching eye of Cromwell, hidden under the pavement of a little country kirk, they were actually lost to sight for more than a century from the time of the Union down to the year 1818, when they were unearthed by a commission of which one Walter Scott, Esq., was a member and leading spirit.

But Jennie carries me off again. There is something else to be seen—the room where bonnie Mary brought to light her homely son. For my own part I don't think the dainty queen, who loved her comforts, would have put up with such a darksome chamber as that, only I am afraid to express my opinion. For they are very jealous of their historic monuments these Scots, and if they have the misfortune to lose one by fire or otherwise, put it back as nearly as they can without saying much about the matter.

And then I say to Jennie: "Let us quit antiquities for a while, and take to modernities; descend at a run from this castle steep and plunge into the first tram-car that passes." And so we make a swift descent, past the esplanade where a company of Highlanders are going through their drill, and down the darksome High Street, where the only colour is that of big posters announcing excursions and circular tours by land and sea; and then just by the South Bridge we meet a tramway-car, are caught up and whirled past the University and new wide streets lately opened out, and away towards parts unknown. And presently we are landed at the end of the tram-car's journey in a suburb, neat and pleasant, but still cold and severe. Solid substantial villas of the same grey whinstone—solid, substantial comfort within, no doubt, but no smiling welcome for strangers, and so we hail the next tram back again.

There are some magnificent gradients about the city tram-lines, magnificent in the sense of steepness, and as you go whirling down into some abysmal depth with a glance at chimney-pots a hundred feet below, you breathe a heartfelt prayer that everything may hold together and that none of those lumbering vehicles in the thoroughfare the car is now approaching may be deaf to the driver's whistle. The

perils of the way are increased by the number of coal-carts that roll about the streets always in a string of two, the driver sitting stolidly on the leading cart while the horse behind practically drives himself at the end of a long rope. However, the horses are at least as wideawake as the carters, and we arrive safely at the Post Office. And there we meet Mrs. Gillies and Uncle Jock, who have come to look for letters, the weather having now cleared, and walking being practicable.

"And what do you think," cries Mrs. Gillies: "we have met those nice young women and their two friends all so happy together, and quite regretting that they spoke so ill of Edinburgh to begin with. Only your uncle made one of the gentlemen quite angry by talking of 'your good ladies.' 'They're frens,' he shouted, and not too politely, 'nothing but frens.' And, my dears," continued Mrs. Gillies, laughing, "they're just living apart in two different houses, at different ends of the town. Only they meet, you know; yes, they contrive to meet, the poor things, and they might just as well be comfortable together."

"I have it now," cried Uncle Jock, smiting his thigh with a mighty stroke; "I see now why the cannie laddies are so shy. They mind they're in Scotland now, where folk are married for very little. They're feared the lassies will have them married against their will." Uncle Jock laughed heartily at the notion, but Mrs. Gillies declared that it would be a real kindness to them all to get them married without their knowing it, and send them home all happy and comfortable together. And such is her general benevolence that I feel sure she has some scheme afoot for the purpose.

While we are talking a tram-car is loading up close by for Portobello, and the same idea occurs simultaneously to Uncle Jock and myself, to run down to the seashore and dine somewhere within sound of the waves. Mrs. Gillies and Jennie prefer the table d'hôte at the hotel, and so Jock and I scramble up to the top of the tram-car like emancipated school-boys. Away goes the tram-car, starting at a heavy slope that tries the horses cruelly, and we are presently bowling along within sight of Holyrood, and of Arthur's Seat, that rises in shape something like a Phrygian cap, with a broad valley between it and the Salisbury Crags, that front directly to the town. And there, half-way up, is the little ruined chapel of St. Anthony, and where the green ground is greenest, just

below, is the well dedicated to the same sorely-tried saint.

But to say the truth, the suburbs hereabouts are not very inviting, except for the noble hillside that rises out of them, just as if you had Leith Hill at the foot of Whitechapel; and Jock's Lodge, which has a pleasing festive sound about it, hardly carries it out in practice, for Jock seems to have parted with his lodge to a coal-merchant, and removed elsewhere, unless indeed he keeps a little soldier's tavern close by. For there are barracks close at hand here, and dragoons in brass helmets mounting guard, and a young officer mounting a dog-cart at the gates, driving off somewhere in search of pleasure, and let us hope that he may find it more readily than we. For our trip to Portobello is a little bit of a disappointment. The tide is out for one thing, and the sands don't tempt us. There are solid and comfortable inns, no doubt, where solid food may be obtained, but the pleasant restaurant we had imagined within view of the sea has no counterpart in reality as far as we can make out. And seeing a return tram about to start for Edinburgh, we suddenly resolve to go back as we came.

This time it is a steam car, the engine enclosed in a box with windows to it, and looking like a captive elephant in its cage, while outwardly the curious spectacle is presented of a carriage gliding along without wheels, and without visible means of propulsion. There is a tubular boiler on the roof that must be pleasant in winter time for outside passengers, but that on this warm steaming night suggests roasting alive. Ever and again a bell rings loudly from inside as we approach the usual impassive string of coal-carts, heightening the illusion as to the captive elephant. But in mercy to the horses in these up and down streets of Edinburgh it is to be hoped that the steam experiment may be successful.

With all our haste we are a course and a half behind the rest of the diners at the table d'hôte, and are eyed severely by business men, who evidently think we ought to be mulcted of soup at least for our unpunctuality, and mischievously by Jennie from a distance, who enjoys the discomfiture of our selfish little scheme of pleasure. Our womenkind have not languished during our absence; with a stout sea-captain on either hand, they seem to be enjoying themselves amazingly. One of the seamen, Jennie's captain, is inclined

to be sentimental. "Ah, miss," with a sigh, "if I'd been brought up to society in my youth I should have known how to make myself agreeable to young ladies, but I was brought up on the stormy sea, miss, thousands of miles away from home." But Mrs. Gillies' captain is of sterner mould; his talk is of tornadoes and of tempests, of ships cast away, of mutinies, and massacres in the China Seas. "Not that they ever rose upon me, mem," continues the captain; "I think I know how to manage them, whether they're Lascars, Chinamen, or Maories. Now, there's a Maori; some of us cawptains say you can't get any work out of a Maori unless you kick him about and beat him, but that's no my plan." "I am glad to hear that," cries amiable Mrs. Gillies; "kindness is so much better. You can subdue anyone with kindness." "Umph!" cries the captain, "that's no my plan neither; I just mawk them, mem." Mrs. Gillies looks a little puzzled. "Yes, mem," continues the captain, "I mawk them. I treat them with scorn and derision. 'You, tee-yee-maree,' I say to such an one, 'why don't you go home and sneak among the women?' Or I'll call another one by the very worst name they have in their language—a skulking fellow who does nothing—and that raises their spirits so as you've no idea." "Does it, indeed?" cries Mrs. Gillies, rather disenchanted. "Well, I should have thought it would have hurt their feelings, poor fellows."

Afterwards we turn out into the street, the sun just setting, and a lovely crimson glow filling the ravine below, while the windows of the old town are all aflame, with a glamour upon the dark tall houses, and the castle, too, in its glory—grey rock, and green slope, and massive wall, all touched with radiance for the moment. And then a bugle-call rings out the last post with its melancholy refrain. It is a fitting farewell to old Edinburgh. But as we are to be away early in the morning, we have still sundry places to visit while there is still daylight in the sky—the new town in general, which is more than a century old, after all, and first to St. Andrew's Square, handsome, but severe, and devoted chiefly to insurance companies, with a fine green in the middle, where men are playing bowls, some girls sitting in an arbour and looking on, the whole scene recalling an earlier stage of social development. Then to Walter Scott's town-house, Number Thirty-nine, Castle Street, a plain comfortable-looking house, suitable to a writer to

the signet, the principal part of the front a round projecting bay, from the upper windows of which there must be pleasant views on either hand—the Firth of Forth on the one hand, with a glimpse of the mountains of Fife; on the other the brave old castle, with its grand and varied outline. The house is now converted into offices, but there is a bust of Scott over the doorway, and the door, half-open, reveals a glimpse of a little grass-plot and narrow enclosed garden behind, with a certain cheerfulness about the place that is rather attractive. But as for the new town in general, with its air of grim propriety, there are probably some of the dullest streets in the universe to be found within its limits.

Next morning finds us all present in good time in the valley of railways, the day fine and breezy, sunshine and soft shadows passing over the city. There is a sort of reticence about the Scotch character that finds a dumb expression everywhere. Even at the railway-stations there are no friendly boards to show the unaccustomed traveller the way. He must learn from experience. Once having missed his train, from not knowing where to look for it, he will be better instructed in the future. Happily Uncle Jock has a powerful voice, and one whose accent appeals strongly to the sympathies of Scotch porters and guards, and we do not miss our train, although we make a narrow shave of it, from looking for it in a wrong direction. And so we pass by a tunnel under the foot of the Castle Hill, and come out into a pleasant well-cultivated plain, bounded by the Pentland Hills in the distance. Then, after a run of a few miles, we cross Almond Water, which Jennie says ought to be called Burnt Almond Water, so brown and coloured is it. And then we pass a pleasant wooded demesne known as Newliston, which once belonged to the Earl of Stair—a descendant of the man who planned the massacre of Glencoe—and which in the '45 was occupied, according to Scott, by the Macdonalds of Glencoe, who, it is pleasant to learn, were not entirely extirpated, as school impressions would lead us to think. And then we have a glimpse of a little castle—a pleasant mellow ruin, where the Setons once lived, warm adherents of Queen Mary. Was not Mary Seton one of the queen's Maries? Here it is said that Mary slept a night on her escape from Loch Leven Castle; and soon after we come in sight of Linlithgow,

with its palace and fine old church charmingly grouped among trees, a little loch glittering below in the sunshine.

A DANGEROUS GUIDE.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

FRAULEIN SCHWARTZ stood at the door of her cottage, looking anxiously down the road between the mountains. She shaded her eyes with her brown palm and peered along the winding way, which was visible for a mile, except where it curved round the base of a rock too ponderous to be removed. Yes, at last there was no mistake, there was a traveller walking towards her cottage.

"Time enough, too," she soliloquised. "Since they opened the new road on the other side of the hill all the carriages go that way, and no one comes here except some poor tourist who can't afford to ride, or an artist who carries his brushes on his back and little enough besides. Who is going to buy my beautiful carvings that I got from Paris now, I wonder!"

It certainly seemed hard to the *fräulein* that a diversion of traffic should go so near ruining her, for she had forsaken her German home some years before and settled in Switzerland in the hope of increasing her income by furnishing the ever-increasing horde of travellers with necessaries in the shape of food and lodging, and luxuries in the shape of carved beads and trinkets of all sorts.

The tourist who was now plodding up the neglected track was the first she had seen for two days.

"Good-morning, sir," she said, as soon as Hardy was within easy hail. "It's a very warm day, sir."

"Warm!" ejaculated Hardy, throwing himself on a bench; "it's melting. I've left a good part of myself on the road. If this goes on I must erect a monument to my remains in Switzerland when I go home. Drink, my good woman; I am parching."

But before he had finished asking for it she had brought him a large jug of milk, which he seized and drained.

"That lubricates the thorax satisfactorily," he remarked as he finished. "Now, my good woman, I've a friend a little way behind. Can you put us up for the night?"

"Yes, sir; I've two nice clean beds."

"You're sure they're clean?"

"Oh yes, sir; they haven't been slept in for a long while."

"Oh, haven't they? You had better run a warming-pan through them, then, if you have such an article; if not, my hat on the end of an alpenstock will do just as well, for it's nearly red-hot. I'll just go in and have a wash and a shave if you will show me my room."

"This way, sir; it's got a beautiful view."

Hardy picked up his knapsack and followed her, remarking to himself:

"'Beautiful view!' That's what they always say when your window opens on the back of a cowshed."

Probably he would not have gone straight to his room had he chanced to look along the road in the direction of the summit of the pass, for there stood a charming little maiden marshalling her goats preparatory to driving them to the enclosure for milking. But though he had not seen her, she had caught sight of him, and after her goats were safely housed she tripped down to the cottage to see who had arrived.

Life was rather monotonous amongst the mountains, and, besides, Nina had a special wish to be seen to-day, for it was her birthday, and on these festivals she was permitted to wear a necklet which a rich Englishman had given her two years ago for nursing him when he was lying ill at the cottage. So Nina left her goats, and ran to find out who had arrived.

She reached the cottage, and was just passing in at the door, when she heard a footstep behind her. Curiosity urged her to look round, but maidenly dignity forbade the step, so she passed on, wondering if the stranger would speak. He did not; but she felt an arm steal round her waist and a kiss on her cheek.

She darted round in indignation, and met the amused look of Walter, her betrothed.

"Why, Nina, are you going to be angry with me for stealing a kiss on your birthday?"

"Oh no, Walter dear; I did not know it was you."

"Who else did you think it could be, little one? Ah, I did not tell you I was coming over the pass to-day so as to see you before I return to the Brünig."

As he spoke he held out a bracelet of carved wood—not very valuable, perhaps, but it was his own work. Nina lifted up her little face to thank him with a kiss as he bent to fasten it round her wrist.

"Nina, who gave you that necklet?" he asked as his eye caught sight of it.

"Mr. Linton, an Englishman, two years ago. I only wear it on my birthdays."

"I never saw it before."

"You forget we were not betrothed a year ago. Come, my Walter, you must not be jealous. I have never seen him since; I do not know where he is, or anything about him."

But Walter's face did not resume its gay look; he knew something of the free ways of certain travellers, and did not like to know that his Nina had taken a present from an English milord.

"I must go and milk the goats now," continued Nina; "come and help me."

But her step-mother's voice at that moment called her into the cottage.

"Wait for me a minute, Walter," cried Nina as she ran in. Walter, however, strolled slowly towards the goats, thinking he would begin the milking without waiting till the fräulein had said all that she wanted.

As Nina disappeared through the back door, Hardy came out of the front, his face covered with lather, and in a state of comical distress.

"Confound it all!" he exclaimed, "my razor is in Linton's knapsack. I thought I heard a man's voice here too; where is he?"

He was surprised to feel an arm grasp his, but immediately drop it with a little shriek.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir; I thought you were Walter."

"I'm sorry to say I am not," began Hardy, but Nina commenced to laugh as she saw his condition.

"I almost kissed you without looking," she said with a smile.

"Don't let any consideration for me stop you," replied Hardy gallantly; "but, perhaps, if you could get me a towel the operation would be pleasanter for both of us."

Nina had tripped away before he finished, and soon returned with the towel. But instead of giving it to Hardy, she began to signal with it. This was too much, and he gently took it from her.

"Please postpone your signals for a moment, my little maiden," he said, but she took no notice.

"Why does he turn away, and go on still?" she asked.

"Who?"

"Walter."

"I give it up, perhaps because he sees me."

Nina ran away in the direction of the goats, and was soon out of sight.

"Corydon and Phyllis have had a slight row," mused Hardy; "however, I suppose they will make it up again; it must be a serious business to quarrel with the only available lover within twenty miles. Hullo! here's the lazy fellow crawling up at last. Come along, old tortoise!"

A handsome young man, with light wavy hair and moustache, came slowly up, and sat down on the bench with a sigh of relief.

"I've been resting, Jack," he said.

"'Twould be more worthy of remark if you hadn't."

"You walk at such a pace, you know."

"So do you, and a jolly slow one it is. Where's my razor? Lend me your knapsack. Look here, you sit out here for five minutes and recruit yourself with some milk whilst I shave."

Hardy disappeared into the house, but a moment after his head appeared out of the window, over the bench on which his chum was lying.

"This is first-rate," he remarked; "I can go on shaving, and listen to your insprising conversation at the same time."

"What beautiful scenery!" exclaimed Linton, looking down the valley.

"A1," returned Hardy; "and the milk is on a level with it."

"We shall have this view from our room."

"Yes, but a little more furniture and a little less scenery would be more my form. Look at this looking-glass—one eye at a time, please; there isn't room for more on it."

"This valley always brings happy thoughts to me," said Linton half to himself.

"Can't wonder at it," returned Hardy as he gave a finishing touch to his chin.

"You were laid up for a week with a sprained ankle somewhere about here, I think, two years ago, weren't you? And we nearly lost ourselves last night trying a short cut."

"That was a happy time, Jack."

"Which?"

"When I sprained my ankle. I was nursed by the most charming girl. I wonder if she lives here now. We were like brother and sister before I went away."

"I've seen her, my boy. But you must take care; she's got a strapping young fellow hanging around who's as jealous as Othello. I'm afraid I've caused a little heart-burning already. Oh, I am a sad dog!"

"What a fool you are, Jack."

"All right, don't you make yourself one as well. Here's the old dragon."

Fräulein Schwartz had heard voices, and come out to welcome the new arrival. She well remembered Linton, and received him with effusion.

"Nina will be back in a minute or two, sir; she has only gone to milk the goats. She has grown since you saw her, sir."

"Ah, she was a girl then; I suppose she is a woman now."

"You shall see, sir—here she comes."

Linton watched her as she came down the road, not altogether pleased to see a tall young fellow with her.

On the other hand, Walter was so vexed at seeing two strangers, evidently waiting her return, that he had half a mind to turn back and retreat over the pass in anger. But his jealousy kept him near his betrothed; he could not let her out of his sight.

"Well, Nina," said Linton as she came up, "I've come back, you see, as you asked me two years ago."

"I am glad to see you, sir," she replied demurely, for she felt that Walter's eyes were on her.

"Fräulein Schwartz made me expect to find you quite a woman, but you are still my little Nina, I see. Are you grown too big to be kissed now?"

"Don't be a fool, Charlie," whispered Hardy to him; "can't you see that fellow looks as if he would like to murder you?"

But the question had been already decided by Nina's drawing back her hand from Linton's, and walking up to Walter. The latter, however, did not look at her, but gazed moodily across the valley.

"A sweet youth that," remarked Linton carelessly.

In the meantime Walter was clenching his hands in his pockets, and muttering to himself: "She told me that she did not know where he was, and he was in the house all the time. And he would have kissed her!"

CHAPTER II.

"WELL, Charlie, I suppose we are to push on to Werhausen to-day," said Hardy as they sat outside the cottage next morning over their breakfast.

"Yes, I suppose so. Where's Nina vanished? I want some more milk."

"You've about a pint left; let Nina alone, my boy. As it is, that fellow Walter seems to be unable to make up his mind whether to be angrier with you or with Nina. Look at him now, his scowl is enough to turn the milk sour."

"Oh, bother Walter; I've come twenty miles out of my way to see Nina, and I shall ignore Walter's existence for the next hour. I suppose we ought to start at nine."

"Yes, and we shall have all our work cut out, for I don't mean to try any more short cuts without a guide."

"Perhaps Nina can tell us whether we can get one. I'm going to see, at any rate. Nina!"

She came running out, and Linton made her sit down whilst he questioned her about the possibility of obtaining a guide to Werhausen. His excuse for detaining her was not a very happy one, for she at once said that Walter was returning in that direction to-day, and would be glad to guide them.

Hardy looked at Linton interrogatively.

"I wish, Jack, you'd try to arrange it with him," said the latter; "he won't do it if I ask him, I'm afraid, and time is an object now."

"All right, I'll try what I can do," replied Hardy. "I think he'll come if only to ensure our being at a distance from Nina."

Walter was not very tractable; at first he refused, but presently yielded, apparently because of some idea which had struck him. He recommended that a start should be made at once, to which no objection could be well made, so the friends packed up their knapsacks and were soon ready.

"Good-bye, Nina," said Hardy, holding out his hand; "don't forget me before this afternoon."

"Good-bye, Nina," echoed Linton. "Come, Hardy, I'm ready. By Jove! though, I've left my alpenstock in our room. Just get it for me, Walter."

Walter had brought out the baggage from the room, so he could not refuse to do as he was requested. The moment he disappeared Linton drew Nina to him and kissed her.

"That's a good-bye kiss, Nina, for I suppose you'll be married long before I come to Switzerland again. Mind you don't tell Walter."

But, as Hardy knew, there was no need to tell Walter. The bedroom window overlooked the group, and the lover had been a spectator of what had happened. Hardy saw his face for a moment with an angry flush upon it, but he did not see the intense hatred which shot from his eyes as he drew back into the room. However, in a few moments he came out, apparently calm. He kissed Nina, and the fräulein,

who only came out at the last minute with the bill which she had been concocting, and soon the travellers were only a speck in the distance to the inhabitants of the cottage.

Linton did not give a thought to the jealousy which he had excited in Walter's mind; in fact, he was scarcely aware of its existence. He did not know that the guide's was an intensely passionate and suspicious temperament; that for one thing he knew he imagined a dozen; that he always made his visits to Nina unexpectedly in order to know whether she had any other admirers than himself. Had he known all this, he might have taken seriously the taciturn way in which the guide plodded on, never offering an observation, and replying as little as possible to what was said. He even refused a cigar which Hardy offered him, a very rare thing for a guide to do.

"I sha'n't be sorry when we drop our new acquaintance," remarked Linton; "he is very uninteresting."

"I sha'n't care if that's his worst fault," replied Hardy.

"He certainly has one rather more annoying; he seems to be able to pick out the worst bits of ground in the district. I'm getting tired already, and we haven't walked three hours."

"And with one rest. This is a most wretched sort of wilderness. Have you ever been near here before?"

"Never. I'm utterly out of my reckoning."

"It seems to me," said Hardy, "that Werhausen lies a good deal more to the north, whilst he is working us continually to the west."

"Ask him."

Hardy did so, but elicited no answer except that the way they were going was the right one.

"But look here," exclaimed Linton testily, as they had to help each other up a rock; "we don't want to do any climbing to-day, we want to get to Werhausen, and the road can't be over a mountain."

"If you are not content to follow me," replied Walter surlily, "it would be best for you to go your own road."

This was a finish to the conversation, for, as the tourists had already supposed, they were utterly out of the ordinary track, and neither of them had an idea of their position. Linton received the man's impertinent answer with a philosophic shrug, resigning himself to the unpleasantness of a harder

walk than he had anticipated, but Hardy, who had caught sight of his face as he spoke, began to feel seriously uneasy.

"I say, Charlie," he said, "don't do anything to make that fellow angry."

"Make him angry? It's the other way, I think. I'm getting fairly savage with him for leading us this dance."

"I wouldn't tell him so if I were you."

"Why not?"

"Well, you see, if he were to become unpleasant, it would be rather awkward for us, wouldn't it?"

"I don't see that; we are two to one. Besides, why should he turn unpleasant?"

"He saw you kissing Nina this morning."

"Did he? I can't help it; he shouldn't have been looking."

"Unfortunately he was, and I can't help thinking he means to pay us out."

"You think he is taking us this round by way of administering a lesson to us? By Jove! if I thought so——"

"Do keep still, Charlie; don't make him angry."

"Why, what on earth's come over you, Jack? Surely you aren't afraid of that fellow?"

"Yes, I am, I confess it."

"Why, I believe I could tackle him single-handed, and I'm sure you could."

"Yes, but we are in his power. If he means mischief he has nothing to do but choose his time for doing it."

"Good heavens, Jack! do you mean that he thinks of losing us on the mountain?"

"I don't say he does, but I fear it. And if he does, how can we prevent him? All he has to do is to suddenly run off; we can never overtake him, as he knows very well. In half an hour he would be out of sight, and we—where should we be?"

Linton grew pale, but recovered himself. They were now walking along the side of a buttress of the mountain, up which they had been toiling. The ascent was very gradual and they could talk without undue exertion. Walter was a couple of yards in front, stolidly striding along.

"What shall we do, Jack?" asked Linton, who recognised in his companion a stronger mind. "Is it any good to tell him that I meant nothing by kissing Nina, and that I shall never see her again?"

"No, no; we must not let him suspect us or it is all up. When we come to a good place we will propose stopping to eat something; one of us must keep near him all the time. Or, better still, you must get

faint and insist on taking his arm. You must never let it go ; as long as he is with us we are safe, for I scarcely expect his wish for revenge is strong enough to let him risk his own safety."

"I believe he means to thoroughly tire us out before he does anything, and that won't take long, so far as I am concerned ; my legs are beginning to give way, and he is going on as fresh as paint. Let's bring matters to a crisis."

"Hi, Walter !" shouted Hardy ; "we're getting hungry. We'll stop here and have some bread and cheese."

"There is a much better place a little further on," replied the guide, "where there is a spring."

"Shall we go on ?" whispered Hardy to Linton. "Be as careless as you can."

"As you like ; if there is a spring it will be a blessing."

"All right, let's go on if it isn't far," said Hardy aloud. "But my friend is knocked up ; you must give him your arm, and I'll take that knapsack, if you like."

Linton moved forward to take his arm, Hardy had already taken hold of the knapsack so quickly that the guide had had no time to move away even if he had wished. He made no objection to the proposal, and Linton put his arm through his, Hardy keeping close in the rear. They could still talk to each other, for they knew that Walter did not understand English.

In this manner they plodded wearily on for another mile, no slight distance when the path is over rocks and loose stones. The scene was a most impressive one, but at present its exceeding desolation was the characteristic which the two friends felt most strongly. Not a house was in sight, and scarcely a tree ; nothing but bare rocks and earth. Below them lay a deep dark valley, with a rushing torrent which now looked a mere white thread ; above them black rocks, capped with everlasting snows. For all that they could tell theirs were the first human footsteps that had ever fallen in this desolate spot.

Walter had spoken truth. There was a spring ahead of them, and the sight of it revived their spirits. They took it in turns to drink, one filling his cup whilst the other mounted guard over the guide. The latter seemed to be conscious by this time that he was the object of suspicion, but his action and look did not alter. He ate his crust and drank the water without making any attempt to move away from them, and Hardy half began to hope that he had been

wronging him. At any rate he determined to make one more attempt at conciliation.

"What time shall we reach Werhausen, Walter ?" he asked.

"I shall get there about six," he replied.

"Allowing how long for rest ?" asked Hardy, purposely taking no notice of his using the word "I."

"You can rest as long as you like," was the answer, "but I am going on."

"What do you mean ? We've hired you as our guide, and you'll have to stop or go on as we wish."

"I am not your guide. I would not take money from you if I were starving. I only brought you here to take you away from Nina. It will be a long time before you find your way back there again, my fine young gentlemen."

This was a declaration of war, and all felt it to be so. Walter rose and faced them, standing about two paces off. Hardy looked straight at him and said : "Do you mean that you have brought us out of our way because of some harmless flirting with Nina ?"

"Yes," shouted Walter, losing all command of himself and making his voice echo down the mountain, "yes, you would come with your full purses and your smiling faces to turn her away from me, who love her and work for her, and live from week to week on the chance of seeing her. You give her fine presents which she wears, and she tells me with an innocent smile that she does not know where the gentleman who gave them her has gone, and ten minutes afterwards I find him at the cottage and wanting to kiss her. She little thinks I saw him kiss her this morning when he sent me in to fetch his alpenstock. But now it is my turn, you are in my power."

Hardy stepped forward to seize him, but he stretched out his hand.

"Did you hear that ?" he asked. "Look down the valley."

A roll of thunder reverberated from mountain to mountain, and instinctively the two friends looked down into the dark valley below them. At the same moment with a mocking laugh Walter sprang down the rock. His ruse had succeeded, and they were alone on the mountain.

But his triumph was a short one. Exasperated beyond measure at the trick, and desperate at the state of affairs, Hardy seized a stone as large as his two fists and threw it after the retreating guide. He was a good cricketer and his missile sped

truly, hitting Walter on the left shoulder. With a cry he fell forward, rolling over several times before he stopped. The two friends leapt wildly down the mountain in pursuit, reaching him whilst he was still on the ground. Linton seized him with a grip that showed that he meant to give him no further chance of escape, when a groan broke from the guide's lips.

"Gently, Charlie," said Hardy, "you're hurting him; I'm afraid he's broken something. What's the matter, Walter?"

"My arm," replied the guide feebly; "I think it is broken."

Hardy knew something of surgery, so he examined the arm and found it was broken below the elbow. It had become doubled up underneath him as he fell. Hardy tore up their handkerchiefs and bound the arm up after setting it as well as he could; a shirt from his knapsack was made into a tolerable sling, and when all had been done that could be done, they helped Walter back to the spring and bathed his shoulder and head, the one bruised by the stone, the other by the fall. He received their attentions without thanks, but without any objections. He was evidently in great pain, and appeared to have forgotten the recent excitement that he was in.

"Now, Walter," said Hardy after a short rest, "do you feel well enough to walk again? You can take my arm, and when I'm tired Linton will help you along. We must rest every now and then, for we don't feel very fresh. How far is it to the nearest house?"

"Two hours' walk away there is a cottage; we can't reach Werhausen to-night. We must start at once, or we shall have the storm on us."

Without more talk they rose and set off. It was a weary tramp; they began by retracing their steps for nearly an hour, and then turned off by the side of a pine-forest in the direction of Werhausen. By this time it had come to Linton's turn to help the invalid, and he could not refrain from telling him how mistaken he was about Nina.

"She had no idea I was coming to the cottage; I did not know it myself till a few days ago. And that necklet that I gave her two years ago was when she was a child, and nursed me when I sprained my ankle. Besides, Walter, when she found that you were angry with her for wearing it, she determined to give it back to me. Look here, here it is; she gave it to me before breakfast this morning, when you

saw us together, and were so savage about it."

"Is that all true?" he asked.

"Every word, on my honour."

"Then I have been a jealous fool, and have come very near being something worse. I would have killed you if I had dared as we climbed up the side of the mountain this morning, and now you are saving my life though you know I meant to leave you on the mountain to die. But look, the storm is coming; you must run and leave me. The cottage is round that next point; you will get there in time."

"No, you must come too; walk as fast as you can."

"No, leave me; I will shelter under this rock till it is over."

"Nonsense! you'll never be able to walk a yard by yourself. Lean on me as much as you like."

Walter had been getting more feeble during the last half-hour, and had once or twice shown symptoms of fainting; it would have been almost certain death to leave him alone now with a storm rapidly approaching. So the two friends toiled painfully on with their heavy burden, footsore and weary, and scarce able to drag one foot before the other. They had abandoned all hope of reaching the cottage before the storm broke; they knew that when once it had begun there was very little chance of proceeding; and hope of safety had almost died. Suddenly, however, Linton caught sight of a peasant making all speed for the shelter of the cottage; they shouted to him and he came to their assistance. Another moment and the rain came, a thick mist filled the air, and for all they could tell they might be a hundred miles from the little chalet. Fortunately the peasant knew the vicinity of his home blindfold, and after a struggle against the tempest, they were safely housed from its fury.

A night's rest revived the strength of all three. Under Walter's willing guidance they accomplished, in a few hours, the rest of the distance to Werhausen, where medical aid was procured. Before they parted, Walter took Linton aside and begged him to let him have the necklet which Nina had returned to him.

"I will give it to her again," he said, "and will ask her to wear it always, and when I feel suspicious or jealous again I shall look at it, and it will remind me of the time that we have spent together on the road to Werhausen."

VIOLINS, OLD AND NEW.

READERS of newspapers have, of late, been made familiar with an odd advertisement in which a violin called a Stradivarius, and labelled "Faciebat Cremona, 1721," is offered for sale at the price of thirty shillings, the fortunate, or, we ought perhaps to say, the unfortunate possessor being so much in want of cash that he is willing, nay, anxious to part with his treasure for a sum barely sufficient to pay for one week's advertising. It may fairly be said that the violin whose extraordinary merits are daily set forth in the papers, but never acknowledged by an ungrateful public, must have cost its possessor a very large sum indeed; enough, perhaps, to pay for all the fiddles of a London theatre. Why, then, is it never bought? Why do dealers, hungry for profit as they are for the most part, and quick at turning an honest pound, why do dealers allow an opportunity so splendid to escape them? Here is a violin made by the greatest maker in the world going for a song or the price of a child's toy—thrust on the public, as it were, out of sheer philanthropy and good nature. Day after day the advertiser insists on its merits; and day after day the public read and wonder and cry *mirabile dictu*; but no one buys the treasure—no one, by purchase or otherwise, makes the marvel of it to cease. Perhaps its mystery is cunningly fostered? Perhaps people buy it every day and daily discover that it has duplicates—rare and beautiful duplicates as good as itself, and quite as worthy of its label as a bottle of port is worthy of the dust and cobwebs which Time, or a crafty hand, has placed upon its neck. Dear innocent public! How pleasant it is to see you with your bottle of wine, the glass of which a month ago was clean and spotless, and alike guiltless of the spider's web and the damp of cellars. How sweet to see you drink that wine, and eye it lovingly, and smack your lips over it! You are just the public to believe in labels, brand-new and coffee-stained, with monstrous dates upon them, and coloured firewood carefully done up and varnished in the guise of a fiddle. Not that we would in any way speak disparagingly of the thirty-shilling Stradivarius. We would as soon accuse the moon of being a composition of Gruyère, and the glow-worm, with its soft emerald light, of being a Brummagem article. All we would say is that Stradivarius, of Cre-

mona celebrity, does not make old violins now; he makes new ones. He lives all over Europe and in many parts of America; and he takes various names, according to the country he inhabits—Smith, perhaps, in England, and Schmidt in Germany, and Forgeron and Fabbro in France and Italy.

Why is there such a demand for old violins? Is it simply because they are old? By no means. There are old impostors as well as young ones. Is it because they were made by men—famous men or the reverse—who have been dead a hundred years? Yes, and no. Yes, because a good violin gets better and better; and no, because mere age cannot improve it. A violin locked up for a century, and never used, cannot improve. Age is as nothing to it. The tones it would have yielded on the first days of its imprisonment are the same as those it will yield after its release. The secret of a good violin does not lie in its age alone, but in its use—its constant and careful use. It is the work it does; it is the constant action of the bow and the mellowing effect of pure tones and loving sympathy; it is all this, and not mere antiquity which gives its value to the instrument, and places it as a work of art side by side with famous pictures and engravings, and immortal statuary. In other words it is the labour of the musician which enhances the work of the craftsman; it is the talent, or genius, of the player which gives life and inspiration to the dead pieces of wood. How artfully these are joined together! How well is the hollow scooped, and propped, and embellished, and made resonant; how wondrous is the power of the strings, how mathematical their exactitude, how fraught at once with tenderness and grandeur when a strong and loving hand propels the bow for the awakening of the angel of sound—the unseen spirit of melody whose voice is alone heard to perfection when a Joachim, a Sivori, or a Paganini plies the wand of the exchanter!

Otto, the great German authority on violins, states in his important work, *The Violin: its Construction and Preservation*, that the instrument when complete should consist of fifty-eight different parts; while Dubourg, another authority, brings the total number of pieces up to seventy-one, allowing twenty-four bits instead of twelve, for the purfling, and two bits, instead of one, for the tail piece. The wood employed should be of three kinds: sycamore for the neck and back and some other parts; soft red deal for the belly and

sound-post, as well as for the cross-bar and six inner blocks; and ebony for the finger-board and tail-piece of the instrument. It is not true, as many suppose, that the sound-post and cross-bar are introduced as strengtheners; they are introduced to increase the vibration—a scientific item not yet thoroughly understood, though oftentimes explained by professors, both practical and theoretical. Too great attention cannot be paid to the structure and position of the bridge, its height and breadth, and architectural proportions—for there is architecture of a dainty nature in the fairy bridge of melody along which the conductors of sound are made to pass. If too high the tones produced are dulled and rendered coarse; if too low the tones become too sharp and thin. The sound-post should stand at the distance of half an inch below the left foot of the bridge; and the instrument should be cleaned out twice a year by the insertion of a handful or so of barley made warm and introduced through the F holes, so called from their hieroglyphical resemblance to the sixth letter of the alphabet, the barley to be well shaken in the violin before being extracted. The strings should be of Lombard make, if not Roman; the resin should be properly purified, and not used in its thick and clammy state; and the instrument, whose soul is to be made to speak, must be unclogged by extraneous substances, such as varnish and white of egg, which are so often employed to fill up the pores of the wood. The violin must breathe; its pores must be unclogged; the spirit within must have a healthy body. Give it this and you improve the music to be expected from it; tamper with the form of the violin, and the spirit inside it, when the bow is used, will complain and quarrel, and in competent hands will denounce the vandals who destroy its comfort.

From these remarks it will be seen that the violin, in a perfect condition, almost takes rank among sentient things, and, like a living child, requires fostering care and tender sympathy and ministration. To obtain it, in its perfected state, with the voucher of a responsible name upon it, is the hope and ambition of connoisseurs. To buy one at a sale, or an auction, is to do a deed to be remembered; to be spoken of as Mr. Such-a-One who owns a Cremona fiddle of undoubted parentage and training, is the joy of a lifetime; and whether he can play it or not, the possessor feels he is a somebody, and like the gentleman who owns a Raphael or a Murillo, without possessing the power

to paint, he glories in his Steiner or his Stradvarius as if in some sort he were a patron of the fine arts, and a hanger-on, if not an actual associate, of musicians. It is to gratify these aspirants to fame or notoriety; it is to tickle the fancy and tempt the pocket of soaring but incompetent amateurs; that the Smiths and Schmidts of England and Germany, the Forgerons of France and the Fabbri of Italy, parade in print the virtues and the rarities of their so-called treasures and bargains. One house alone, one notorious firm of fiddle-makers existing in a land which need not be specified, having its domicile in a town whose identity need not be established, have, it is said, supplied to commerce as many as five thousand "genuine and undoubted Cremonas," some professing to be the work of Stradvarius, some of Guarnerius, and some of the two Amati. The firm flourishes, and the buyers of the treasures it turns out keep on augmenting year after year, so that hardly an orchestra exists which does not boast of half-a-dozen Cremonas among its instruments!

First and foremost among old violins—real and not sham antiquities—may be mentioned the Guarnerius of Paganini, the beloved friend and inseparable companion of the greatest of virtuosi, an instrument he loved more fondly even than his precious Stradvarius, albeit that instrument for purity of tone, and beauty of form and finish, was considered to be peerless. On these famous fiddles, but especially on the first named—a masterpiece of Joseph Guarnerius of Cremona, who flourished in the beginning of the eighteenth century—Paganini could perform such marvels that the piping of the god Pan, and the minstrelsy of Orpheus, as described by ancient writers, were completely thrown into the shade. The tall Italian with his long hair and lank jaws, and his woe-begone and wistful expression of countenance, from which at times the eyes would look out fiercely and defiantly or fraught with tenderness; the inspired and eccentric Genoese, of whom it may be said, with all likelihood of truth, that his like will never be seen again, could with his Guarnerius so excite his hearers, that tears and shouts of joy, mingled at times with suppressed cries of terror, were, in some cases, the immediate result of his playing. Calm and careful writers, critics who, for the most part, considered it imprudent to indulge in too much eulogy, fell into raptures about the playing of Paganini, and wrote in the papers such rhapsodies of rhetoric and

imagination, as in these days would be thought excessive, if not positively alarming, in an established poet.

"The page will be a strange one in the history of art," says an article in *The Athenæum* written at the time of Paganini's first appearance in London, "that page will be strange indeed which shall contain all the rumours that have heralded the great Paganini. Our children will laugh at the credulity of their fathers, when they shall read of a magician whostrung his instrument with the heart-strings of his mistress, a sort of Demon-Orpheus which had been initiated into his power by the ordeals of murder and solitary confinement"—alluding to the belief that Paganini had studied the violin in prison—"and yet such reports are widely spread and, strange to say, accredited. The writer of this notice remembers having heard it gravely said in society that Paganini could play upon the violin when all its strings were taken off! And one of the persons present declared that this wonder of the world had done more than that, having once strung a gridiron, his violin not arriving in time, on which he performed a concerto amidst tremendous applause." M. Guhr, the well known violinist of Frankfort, a beaten and eclipsed rival of Paganini, says of the great Italian that he "astonished everyone by the fiend-like power with which he ruled his instrument, opening to the fancy a boundless space, while to the violin he gave the divinest breathings of the human voice, moving, and at times harrowing the soul." But it is a Frenchman, a writer in the *Parisian Globe* of 1831, who has supplied the wildest and most rapturous account of Paganini's achievements on the Guarnerius. "Behold him," says the French writer, "behold the great artist, compound of chill irony and electric enthusiasm, of haughtiness with seeming humility, of sickly languor, and fitful, nervous, fatal exulting, of wild oddity, chastened by some hidden and unconscious grace, of frank abandonment, of charming attractiveness, of a superiority of talent that might fix the most indifferent, but, above all this, a very man-fiddle, a being of extraordinary nature, created as if expressly for the gratification of a public delighting before all things in the extraordinary. Promptly his looks descend from his violin to the orchestra, he gives the signal, he raises his right hand briskly into the air and dashes his bow upon the instrument. You anticipate a rupture of all the strings. But, on the contrary, the

lightest, the finest, the most delicate of sounds comes forth to win your surprise. He continues for some moments to sport with your preconceptions, to look askance at you, to irritate you; and every whim that occurs to him is employed to draw you out from your supposed indifference. He teases you, he delights you; he springs and runs and glides from tone to tone, from octave to octave; achieves with incredible lightness and precision the widest intervals; ascends and descends the chromatic and diatonic scales; touches harmonic accompaniments in his way; extracts unknown sounds; searches with easy success for difficulties and tricks of skill; exhausts within the space of a few bars the whole range of chords and sounds possible upon the instrument—discourses, sings, bewails, describes, ejaculates! 'Tis suddenly a murmur of waves, a whistling in the air, a warbling of birds; a something indefinitely musical in the most acute as well as the lowest tones." After alluding to the broad and stately manner of Paganini's playing, when it suited his philosophical mood, the writer proceeds as follows: "Chords that are sweet and pure, melodious and brilliant, stream from beneath his bow; and then come accents of nature that seem to flow from the heart itself, and affect you with a surprising thrill of delight; and then (prodigy of harmony!) the vague moans and unfinished plainings of a melancholy abandonment. You sympathise, in gentle pain, with the touching and melodious artist; you dispose yourself to follow at his direction, the course as it would seem of some mournful fleeting intangible vision, when instantly a fit of violent distress, a sort of shuddering fury, seizes him, and we are startled, chilled, tormented by cries which pierce the inmost recesses of our frame, and make us tremble for the hapless being whom we behold and fear. We dare not breathe; we are half suffocated. But now amid the passionate harmonies of love you shall hear the interspersed accents of coldness, disdain, and raillery. After a voluptuous transport you shall have mincing and caprices; you shall have your pizzicati!" Perhaps the reader thinks that the French critic has reached the climax of his enthusiasm? By no means. Here is the wind-up of his article—a piece of writing which deserves to live, if only to show that at one time, and that, too, within the memory of living men, a haggard, weird, unkempt Apollo, with ugliness for his dower instead of beauty, existed upon our earth. "Now," says the

French writer, "you have your contrasts and satanic fooleries, now your touches of the extravagant. 'Tis a dose of madness or despair; 'tis an agony, the sensation of a man suspended over a bottomless abyss; 'tis a violin which is at once a flute, a bass, a guitar, and a whole orchestra, intermixed and confounded!" What has become of the instrument on which Paganini performed these marvels? Ah, what has become of this matchless violin, so rich and eloquent, so seemingly alive, on which the Magician of the Bow could storm, as it were, the gates of paradise while the angels and fiends of sound seemed struggling for admission? Would anyone know it if he was brought face to face with it? Could anybody swear to its being the genuine article? Hear how Paganini himself was deceived in it, though he knew it as he knew himself, and pause and ponder, oh, ye jubilant amateurs, ere ye part with the substance of thirty shillings, for the shadow of the hope of being possessed of a Cremona.

One day, while approaching Paris in a diligence, after his visit to England, Paganini had the mortification of seeing his beloved Guarnerius fall from the roof of the coach. The delicate instrument received a palpable injury, and had to be taken to Vuillaume, the famous maker and repairer of violins, established in the French capital. Vuillaume not only mended it—as the story goes—but made an exact fac-simile of it, taking both to the Italian virtuoso with the remark that the two instruments, lying side by side in his laboratory, had puzzled him as to their identity. The dismayed musician seized first one and then the other, played upon both, and carefully examined them, together and apart, and ended by exclaiming in distress that he could not decide which was his own. He strode about the room, wild, ecstatic, and in tears—faith and fury alike struggling for the mastery in him, till the honest Parisian, overcome by the sight of a grief and a bewilderment so genuine, and never from the first intending to deceive his client, asked him to keep both violins as a pledge of his esteem and admiration, at the same time pointing out the sham Guarnerius, for which he begged an honourable place in Paganini's household. Who can doubt after this that new violins may be made to look, and speak, as well as old ones? It would appear, indeed, that a great maker—almost as rare a personage as a great player—can, by dint of scientific skill and industry, so thoroughly imitate

an old violin of the Cremona, or any other school, that connoisseurs of the highest reputation are at a loss to discover the difference. In this way, too, it is said, a scientific man can imitate gold, and so manufacture the precious metal as to compete with Nature herself. But at what cost? At twenty times the cost of the actual gold if dug out of the earth. So with violins of the purest tones and fabrication. It is easier to find a real Stradivarius at a sale or an old curiosity shop, than to find a workman able to make one of equal value, or, having made it, to part with it on moderate terms. But there are doubts as to the truth of the Vuillaume story. When it is proved that the grid-iron legend is correct, then, and then only, will every one believe that the story of the false Guarnerius is founded on fact.

So long as there is a craving on the part of the public to obtain soi-disant old violins, which are not old, in lieu of honest new ones, which are what they pretend to be, there will continue to be, as may be presumed, a flourishing trade in modern antiques. The only way to check it—the only way to put amateurs on the right track—is to expose misnomers and pleasantries on the part of violin manufacturers. Let the amateur and the collector be properly initiated into violin-secrets, and dupes will be few in number, and makers of violins will boldly come forward, one and all, in their true colours, as some of them do already, and announce that they are living makers, and not the shadows or ghosts of dead ones. Stained labels, and violins varnished and unvarnished again to look old, are in the course of time likely to become a drug in the market, but violins spick and span new, constructed on the most approved scientific principles, untrammelled by false dates, and unsoiled by false staining, will, in the opinion of good judges, constitute themselves the violins of the present and the future. The popular superstition that age—mere age and non-destruction—improves a violin, will die out when it is known by what means, just, and honourable, and scientific, a new instrument may be endowed with the qualities of an old one, without, in colour, or inscription, or slavish imitation of form, usurping the peculiarities that please the eye and mystify the intelligence. The best new violins, properly so called, and honestly so called, are made with the fact for ever in view that a prolonged existence—a mere adhesion of the

component parts one to the other for a given number of years—does not constitute the *raison d'être* of a fine instrument. Such are constructed on a principle far more intelligent and satisfactory. The best makers know that substance, though something, is not everything in the manufacture of a violin. They know that sound, as well as shape and make, is a necessity for an instrument that has to live, and breathe, and speak; and means are adopted—not cunningly and surreptitiously, but openly and confessedly—to endow a violin in a few months with the tone, or something similar to the tone, of a century's average practice. But how, it may be asked, is such a marvel accomplished? Simply by supplying the new violin with work—hard and bona-fide and unflagging work. Night and day for months, six months, or a year, as the case may be, are the violins placed in a row in the workshop, fixed and immovable, with the resined bows at work above them, first on one string and then on another, and sometimes on two strings at once, the bows moving by machinery all day and all night till the instruments are ready for sale. When they have gone through the proper time of probation, and imbibed for months the sounds that make them mellow and rich, they are carefully raised from their frames, and disposed of in the trade as old or new violins according to the system of the makers. If these are scrupulous they will acknowledge what they have done, and demand the price of their skill or inspiration added to that of their machine practice as part of their labour and proficiency. If the reverse, they will colour and label, and otherwise maltreat their handiwork, and launch their new fiddles on the world as ancient treasures worthy of special prices. Honour to the men who, in making new violins for the market, make and establish their own names as well! They, too, will have their reward. For the time will come when they in turn will take rank among the classic makers, and their posterity, in justice to them, will admire and purchase their instruments, as the world now purchases the works of Stradivarius and the other great makers of Lombardy and the Tyrol.

HOPE'S TRAGEDY.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

LATE in the evening, Mr. Hope's mother and sister were sitting in their dingy little drawing-room. They were

both small insignificant-looking women, plainly dressed in black; yet anyone who cared to study them at all would have found a good deal of strength and intellect in their very ordinary faces. The mother's was the more pleasant; her daughter's was hard and somewhat contemptuous, with traces of struggle and suffering. She was sitting under the gas, bending and straining her eyes over a large piece of embroidery in a frame. Mrs. Hope was in a corner by the fire, which she had just poked into an unusually cheerful blaze. She had also pulled forward her largest armchair to the front of the fire, and, having made these preparations, sat down silently and listened to the pelting rain outside.

"I can't help it if Willie is cross with me, and you too," said her daughter, with a sharp tug at her needle. "I say it is the maddest plan I ever heard of. Suppose this thing comes to smash—where shall we be then? He with nothing to do, you and I left with a hundred a year."

"Of course there always must be some risk," replied Mrs. Hope rather coldly. "The question is, whether the thing you hope to gain is worth it. Willie may well venture something for the sake of a charming wife and a large fortune; and you rather amuse me, Bertha, with this new horror of speculating. I have often heard you say that we ought to have more interest than we get from the funds. Here we shall get our capital doubled, and higher interest besides."

"I am sure that is all nonsense," said Bertha.

"You think your brother is trying to deceive us?"

"No, mother; don't be unfair—I said nothing of the kind. But don't you remember, years ago, when Uncle John tried to persuade you to take some of those bank shares, how thankful you were afterwards, when the bank broke, and hundreds of people were ruined, to think that you had nothing to do with them? Well, I dare say this thing of Willie's may be safer, but it is a wild thing to ask, mother, that you should sell out nearly all you possess, and lend it to him to invest in an insurance office. Do you think Willie is such a good man of business as all that? You'll ask some other advice, surely, before you say 'yes'?"

"I don't know who to ask," said Mrs. Hope. "He will consult somebody, I dare say; but you forget—he is used to the City and money matters. I would quite as soon take his opinion as Uncle John's, for instance."

"I would not pin my faith to either of them, if they were interested," said Bertha, shaking her head.

At this moment her brother came into the room. He looked cross and flushed, and walked with so very much the air of a man used to large rooms that it seemed as if he could hardly help kicking the furniture about.

"Take care of my frame," said Bertha, looking up at him, as he pushed past on his way to his armchair.

"Why do you have that monstrous thing all over the place?" returned her brother.

"Bertha thinks your plan very imprudent, Willie," said Mrs. Hope, after a minute or two, looking earnestly at her darling, who had flung himself into his chair, and was staring at the fire.

"What can Bertha possibly know about it?" said Hope, with the affected reasonableness of extreme anger. "I wonder how many fortunes would be made in England if everybody was like her, and insisted on sticking to those stupid old funds. Prudence is very fine when it doesn't run on into meanness."

"Yes, it is possible to be too prudent," said Mrs. Hope.

Bertha's pale face changed colour a little as she bent over her frame. Though not a very sensitive or romantic person, she was a generous one, and these hints were hard to bear. Her mother and Willie knew very well that all the sacrifices made till now for him had been with her cheerful consent, that the money she earned was mostly spent on him, that she had often denied herself dress and pleasures for his sake. It was hard to be thought selfish and mean because she doubted the wisdom of such a wild speculation as this, a thing that Willie would never have suggested if he had not been in love with the promoter's sister. Bertha, though she adored her brother, and cared for his happiness beyond anything, was not blinded by sympathy so far as quite to forget the claims of her mother and herself. She was not so infatuated as her mother—perhaps that was hardly to be expected from the best of sisters. Her mother, as Willie said, would have starved herself for him cheerfully. Bertha would have done it too in the end, probably, but she would have grumbled at the unfairness of such arrangements.

There was a long silence. The young man sulked, his sister's needle made little creaks as she pushed it in and out of the

tightly-stretched canvas; their mother looked sadly and anxiously from one to the other.

"Well," Hope broke out at last, "I never was so mistaken, so deceived in my life. I let the Hamiltons suppose that there would be no difficulty in getting the money. I made a fool of myself, behaved as if I was sure of it. As for her"—his voice faltered for a moment, but soon grew strong and angry again—"I can't face them again, you know. I shall join Markham—he's going out to Colorado the end of next month."

"Oh, my boy, you must not do that!" exclaimed Mrs. Hope.

"Is it worse than Suez?" asked Willie with a slight laugh. "Yes, it will be, because you won't catch me coming back again."

"Bertha, do you hear?" said his mother in a low tone of agony.

Bertha did not speak for a minute or two. She looked up rather wonderingly at her brother; she could hardly have believed that being in love would have altered him so painfully. This sort of threatening was quite a new means of getting his own way. Then she looked at her mother, and met such miserable imploring eyes that she saw that prudence—or meanness, if they chose—was in a hopeless minority, and must give way.

"I don't know why you are so desperate, Willie," she said. "Nobody said you were not to have the money. I only ventured to remark that the thing sounded rash, but, as you say, I can't possibly know anything about it. Of course Mr. Hamilton believes in it, or he wouldn't make his sister's fortune depend upon it."

"Hamilton is a tremendously sharp fellow. He says it is as safe as the Bank of England," replied Willie. "However, I'm tired of talking. I told you all about it at dinner."

Another pause. Mrs. Hope still looked at her daughter, and presently Bertha spoke again.

"You and mother seem to make it depend on me," she said. "It is her money, and she can of course give it to you if she chooses. I have no business to object."

"Yes, you have quite as much business as I have to ask for it," said her brother.

"I spoke unreasonably, I dare say," Bertha went on. "I was not so much thinking of myself as of mother's old age, and whether a bird in the hand wasn't worth two in the bush. But of course you have thought of that too, Willie. You

wouldn't go in for anything really risky—you couldn't do anything so wrong."

"As far as I know it is a safe concern," Hope answered gravely.

"Then, mother, why don't you tell him he may have it? I withdraw my foolish objections," said Bertha, smiling.

She had a wonderfully sweet smile, which made her quite a different-looking woman as she got up and came towards the fire, her lips trembling as she glanced from the spoilt boy to his mother.

"Take the money, my darling," said Mrs. Hope. "May Heaven bless and prosper you, and give you a happy life with Dora."

Her son thanked her, and allowed her to kiss him, but he showed none of the eager boyish gratitude which had always sweetened the moment of sacrifice to these two poor women. He began immediately to go into business details, without even giving a kind look to Bertha, who stood waiting for her share. At first it seemed impossible that not even a smile or a word of thanks should come her way, but as soon as she saw that she was really to have nothing, she turned away and went back to her frame. It seemed that her hesitation had offended Willie past forgiveness. Wonderful, that spending a few weeks among smart people, and falling in love with one of them, should have hardened a man's heart and warped his perceptions so!

She heard nothing of what Willie was saying, as he talked and explained to his mother. Neither of them addressed her, and though this may not have been intentional, she felt herself suddenly shut out from their love and confidence. Surely this was unjust, and not altogether her own fault. The new experience filled her with a dull aching pain. She went on working mechanically, till the colours in her frame began to swim and dazzle before her eyes, and just in time to stop tears from falling on her beautiful work, Bertha got up and quickly left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

WE may as well pass quickly over that year, though it was a very long one to Willie Hope in his banishment at Suez. Of course, he soon knew perfectly well what he had half known all along, that the "Sink or Swim" was on the verge of bankruptcy, its existence becoming more of a struggle every day. Still there seemed a little hope that the times might improve, and the prospect of a smash was so terrible to him, that he would hardly let himself

believe in the danger, but worked with all his might to keep the thing going, at first with real cheerfulness and enthusiasm. His letters from Julius Hamilton, too, were lively and encouraging, assuring him that the affair was looking up in England, making no doubt that they would fight through their difficulties, and that the future would be as bright as anyone could wish. There is no reason to doubt that Julius, to a great extent, believed what he said.

Things went on in this way till the autumn; but then Hope's sanguine spirit began to give way. His partner's letters took a disagreeable tone, half blaming him for the failure that now seemed imminent. Dora's letters, which had, of course, helped him more than anything, became colder and fewer. Hope felt miserable, and would have welcomed any decent excuse to leave his post and hurry home to England, if only for an hour's talk with her. But in this critical state of affairs he could not leave Suez for a day. Too much depended on pulling through this rough sea of difficulties. He meant to stay where he was, and work to the end.

Just as things seemed at their darkest, and he was waiting, in the deepest anxiety, for a telegram from Julius announcing that all was over, there came a sudden gleam of prosperity. For a moment, the "Sink or Swim" had its sails filled again and went forward dancing on its way. During the few days that this happy state of things lasted, Willie Hope fell ill of fever, and the Suez branch of the company had to carry on its business without him. Hard work, trouble of mind, a climate that disagreed with him, and now this sudden and tantalising reaction, which yet did not bring a letter from Dora, had been too much for the poor young fellow.

His life was only saved by the kindness of a great doctor who was on his way to England, and who decided at once that he must be taken home, even with the risk of his dying on the passage. So, hardly conscious from weakness, and changed and wasted almost beyond recognition, Willie Hope arrived at his mother's house one day in January. A relapse followed, but with his mother and sister to nurse him it was not so serious as the former attack, and very gradually, as the winter days went on, he began to be a little like himself again.

The doctor who brought him home had written to Mr. Hamilton a full account of the circumstances; but no letter came in reply, either to the doctor or to Hope

himself. And in those first sad weeks at home, Bertha was thankful that he never asked for letters, for she noticed with dismay that nothing came from Dora Hamilton.

She and her mother had not had any reason to doubt the solvency of the "Sink or Swim." Their interest had been paid so far, and Willie, even when he was delirious, had said nothing that could warn them. Bertha's only fear was that Dora was inconstant, and at this she was more sorry than surprised. Her first alarm about the insurance company came from an old acquaintance of her brother's who called one day to ask after him, and hoped his interest in the "Sink or Swim" was nothing very great. He understood, he said, that it was rather a shaky affair. Then Bertha in her distress of mind suspected the truth—that Willie had known this all along, and that his anxiety had had a good deal to do with his illness. His brain, however, was not fit for any business talk, and Bertha determined to hold her peace till he was nearly well again, not even mentioning her fears to her mother, who was entirely occupied with him. She would have liked to ask advice, to know whether there would be any chance of saving their fortune in case of a smash, but she did not know whom to ask, and, besides, was afraid she might precipitate matters, or bring Willie into some scrape by speaking. So she kept herself sorrowfully quiet, and tried to be prudent in the housekeeping, which was difficult, with a fanciful invalid in the house.

At last one day Mrs. Hope told her that Willie was better, that he had walked across the room with her help, and had been talking quite reasonably.

"He wants us all to go down to Beachcliff," said Mrs. Hope. "He spoke at first of going alone, but of course that is impossible, and so I told him."

"Beachcliff!" repeated Bertha, with a face of strong disapproval.

"Yes, he longs for the sea, and he is dying to see Miss Hamilton, poor patient fellow, and he wants to have a long talk with Mr. Hamilton, too."

"Naturally. But how does he account for never hearing from them?"

"You are always so dry and suspicious, Bertha. He said something about that. He said they hadn't got his address."

"Dr. Maine sent it to Mr. Hamilton," said Bertha. "Willie doesn't know that. It is a pity he should live in a fool's paradise."

"I am thankful he should live in any

paradise at all. My poor helpless boy, kept away from all he loves best! He doesn't doubt her being faithful, whatever you may do. And if she has any heart at all, it must certainly be touched by seeing him in his present state."

"I don't know. People of that sort don't love illness and sorrow."

"Well, I have not such a shockingly bad opinion of human nature, nor has Willie. In a day or two he really will be well enough to travel, and I thought if you would go down to Beachcliff on Thursday, and take lodgings, he and I might follow on Friday. He is bent upon it, and I really don't see what harm it can do."

"Very well, mother. Yes, I dare say his mind will be more at ease when he has seen the Hamiltons. Anything is better than suspense, perhaps. At the same time I warn you that they are heartless people, or else they would have written before now, or even come to see him. However, I should like myself to make acquaintance with them."

"Then that is settled; you go on Thursday. As to the people, Willie knows them, remember, and you don't."

The plan was carried out. Bertha went down to Beachcliff, and took some cheerful rooms looking on the broad parade where everybody walked up and down, and beyond that on the sea. Her brother was terribly exhausted by his journey, and it was not till Saturday afternoon that he was able to lie on a sofa at the drawing-room window, and be amused by watching the people outside.

Bertha, as she sat near him, was obliged to confess that Beachcliff had a wonderful cheerfulness of its own. The sun was shining in a sky that might have belonged to June; a fresh breeze was blowing sparkles of spray along the bright dancing sea; even the people who were drawn in chairs had colour in their faces, and the others walked with a springing step, as if the fact of living was joy.

"Isn't it jolly!" said Willie Hope, looking out at all this from his sofa. "It used to be just like this last winter."

"And it goes on just the same without you. We are not so important as we think ourselves—we are very soon forgotten." Bertha thought this, but did not say it. She looked at his thin wasted face and feeble white hands, and wondered how he could smile as he spoke of "last winter."

When she turned her eyes to the window again the sunny blue air looked cold and

steely, the faces looked pinched, she could fancy that people's teeth were chattering in that whistling wind, and she hoped the band did not always play such melancholy music.

"There she is!" said Willie suddenly.

"Where?" exclaimed Bertha, starting up.

"Don't you see? And that little beast Boney—fatter than ever."

Bertha stared hard at Miss Hamilton, who interested her deeply, though the fascination had a good deal of dislike in it. She had pictured to herself somebody with a bright colour and a noisy manner, fast and dashing in style. She now saw a tall, slim, elegant-looking woman, very well and quietly dressed in a muffle of fur and feathers, pale, handsome, and smiling calmly as she talked in rather a subdued manner to a gentleman she had just met.

He was a fat man getting on for sixty, who had come up to her in rather an eager intimate way; but as he was standing with his back to the house Bertha could not see what he looked like.

"She is very handsome," said Bertha after a breathless pause.

"Ah! Didn't I mention that?" said her brother, with a laugh in his weak voice.

He had pulled himself up on the sofa, and was leaning forward with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks to look at Dora.

"Did you call the man Boney?" said Bertha vaguely.

"Are you mad? Boney's the dog—the pug; don't you see him sitting by her? Just how he sat and stared one day on the pier—Oh!" and with a weary groan he sank back on his cushions. "I forget the man's name; I used to know him last year. Sir Samuel something—Sir Samuel Grimes—a rich old beggar who lives up on the hill. Now, Bertha, do you mean to kill me with impatience? Rush out to her this minute, and tell her I'm here."

"My dear Willie, I don't think I can. Wouldn't it be better to write?"

"Write! What do you suppose I came here for? I could have written from Kingston. If you don't go I shall be as bad as ever to-night. How am I to live through all those hours with only a glimpse from a window! Don't be a fool. Go

this minute, or I'll open the window and shout to her."

Bertha had seldom had a task she disliked more, but of course she obeyed. After hastily putting her things on, she looked into the drawing-room on her way downstairs.

"Make haste, she's gone home. She has walked off that way, and old Grimes with her. You had better not come back without telling her that I'm here. Ask her to come and see me now, and ask if her brother is here too."

Bertha hurried off upon her disagreeable errand. Though Miss Hamilton's looks were much pleasanter than she expected, it was impossible to forget that she had treated Willie in a heartless and cruel way.

"Yet," thought the fair-minded Bertha, "that may perhaps have been her brother's doing. I feel sure he is odious. He may have destroyed letters, he may have used all sorts of horrid means to separate them, if the company is really coming to grief."

She soon overtook Miss Hamilton and Sir Samuel Grimes. They were walking slowly, and talking a great deal. Sir Samuel, at least, was talking, and his companion listening with attentive graciousness. They seemed so much interested that Bertha could not make up her mind to interrupt them. She followed them slowly along the length of the parade till they left it, and crossed the road to a row of large houses. At the door of one of these they parted. Miss Hamilton went in. Sir Samuel lighted a cigar, and with a complacent air walked back towards the livelier part of the town.

Bertha had not left the parade when they did. She went a little further, then turned back, and with a very quiet countenance and a fast beating heart crossed the road, and boldly rang at Mrs. Hamilton's door.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XX. MR. GREY'S OPINION OF THE SCARBOROUGH FAMILY.

HAD Augustus been really anxious to see Mr. Grey before Mr. Grey went to his father, he would probably have managed to do so. He did not always tell Mr. Jones everything. "So the fellow has hurried up to the governor the moment he came into the house," he said.

"He's with him now."

"Of course he is. Never mind. I'll be even with him in the long run." Then he greeted the lawyer with a mock courtesy as soon as he saw him. "I hope your journey has done you no harm, Mr. Grey."

"Not in the least."

"It's very kind of you, I am sure, to look after our poor concerns with so much interest. Jones, don't you think it is time they gave us some dinner? Mr. Grey, I'm sure must want his dinner."

"All in good time," said the lawyer.

"You shall have your dinner, Mr. Grey. It is the least we can do for you." Mr. Grey felt that in every sound of his voice there was an insult, and took special notice of every tone and booked them all down in his memory. After dinner he asked some unimportant question with reference to the meeting that was to take place in the morning, and was at once rebuked. "I do not know that we need trouble our friend here with our private concerns," he said.

"Not in the least," said Mr. Grey. "You have already been talking about them in my presence and in his. It is necessary that I should have a list of the creditors before I can advise your father."

"I don't see it; but, however, that is for you to judge. Indeed, I do not know on what points my father wants your advice. A lawyer generally furnishes such a list." Then Mr. Grey took up a book, and was soon left alone by the younger men.

In the morning he walked out in the park, so as to have free time for thought. Not a word further had been said between him and Augustus touching their affairs. At breakfast Augustus discussed with his friend the state of the odds respecting some race, and then the characters of certain ladies. No subjects could have been less interesting to Mr. Grey, as Augustus was aware. They breakfasted at ten, and twelve had been named for the meeting. Mr. Grey had an hour or an hour and a half for his walk, in which he could again turn over in his mind all these matters of which his thoughts had been full for now many a day.

Of two or three facts he was certain. Augustus was the legitimate heir of his father. Of that he had seen ample documentary evidence. The word of no Scarborough should go for anything with him—but of that fact he was assured. Whether the squire knew aught of Mountjoy he did not feel sure, but that Augustus did he was quite certain. Who was paying the bills for the scapegrace during his travels he could not say, but he thought it probable that Augustus was finding the money. He, Mountjoy, was kept away so as to be out of the creditors' way. He thought therefore that Augustus was doing this, so that he might the more easily buy up the debts. But why should Augustus go to the expense of buying up the debts seeing that the money must ultimately come out of his own pocket? Because—so Mr. Grey thought—Augustus would

not trust his own father. The creditors, if they could get hold of Mountjoy when his father was dead and when the bonds would all become payable, might possibly so unravel the facts as to make it apparent that after all the property was Mountjoy's. This was not Mr. Grey's idea, but was Mr. Grey's idea of the calculation which Augustus was making for his own government. According to Mr. Grey's reading of all the facts of the case, such were the suspicions which Augustus entertained in the matter. Otherwise, why should he be anxious to take a step which would redound only to the advantage of the creditors? He was quite certain that no money would be paid, at any rate by Augustus, solely with the view of honestly settling their claims.

But there was another subject which troubled his mind excessively as he walked across the park. Why should he soil his hands, or, at any rate, trouble his conscience with an affair so unclean, so perplexed, and so troublesome? Why was he there at Tretton at all to be insulted by a young blackguard such as he believed Augustus Scarborough to be? Augustus Scarborough, he knew, suspected him. But he, in return, suspected Augustus Scarborough. The creditors suspected him. Mountjoy suspected him. The squire did not suspect him, but he suspected the squire. He never could again feel himself to be on comfortable terms of trusting legal friendship with a man who had played such a prank in reference to his marriage as this man had performed. Why, then, should he still be concerned in a matter so distasteful to him? Why should he not wipe his hands of it all and retreat? There was no Act of Parliament compelling him to meddle with this dirt.

Such were his thoughts. But yet he knew that he was compelled. He did feel himself bound to look after interests which he had taken in hand now for many years. It had been his duty—or the duty of some one belonging to him—to see into the deceit by which an attempt had been made to rob Augustus Scarborough of his patrimony. It had been his duty, for a while, to protect Mountjoy, and the creditors who had lent their money to Mountjoy, from what he had believed to be a flagitious attempt. Then, as soon as he felt that the flagitious attempt had been made previously, in Mountjoy's favour, it became his duty to protect Augustus, in spite of the strong personal dislike which from

the first he had conceived for that young man.

And then he, doubtless, had been attracted by the singularity of all that had been done in the affair, and of all that was likely to be done. He had said to himself that the matter should be made straight, and that he would make it straight. Therefore, during his walk in the park, he resolved that he must persevere.

At twelve o'clock he was ready to be taken up to the sick man's room. When he entered it, under the custody of Miss Scarborough, he found that Augustus was there. The squire was sitting up, with his feet supported, and was apparently in a good humour. "Well, Mr. Grey," he said, "have you settled this matter with Augustus?"

"I have settled nothing."

"He has not spoken to me about it at all," said Augustus.

"I told him I wanted a list of the creditors. He said that it was my duty to supply it. That was the extent of our conversation."

"Which he thought it expedient to have in the presence of my friend, Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones is very well in his way, but he is not acquainted with all my affairs."

"Your son, Mr. Scarborough, has made no tender to me of any information."

"Nor, sir, has Mr. Grey sought for any information from me." During this little dialogue Mr. Scarborough turned his face with a smile from one to the other without a word. "If Mr. Grey has anything to suggest in the way of advice, let him suggest it," said Augustus.

"Now, Mr. Grey," said the squire, with the same smile.

"Till I get further information," said Mr. Grey, "I can only limit myself to giving the advice which I offered to you yesterday."

"Perhaps you will repeat it, so that he may hear it," said the squire.

"If you get a list of those to whom your son Mountjoy owes money, and an assurance that the moneys named in that list have been from time to time lent by them to him—the actual amount, I mean—then I think that, if you and your son Augustus shall together choose to pay those amounts, you will make the best reparation in your power for the injury you have no doubt done in having contrived that it should be understood that Mountjoy was legitimate."

"You need not discuss," said the squire, "any injuries that I have done. I have done a great many, no doubt."

"But," continued the lawyer, "before any such payment is made, close enquiries should be instituted as to the amounts of money which have absolutely passed."

"We should certainly be taken in," said the squire. "I have great admiration for Mr. Samuel Hart. I do believe that it would be found impossible to extract the truth from Mr. Samuel Hart. If Mr. Samuel Hart does not make money yet out of poor Mountjoy I shall be surprised."

"The truth may be ascertained," said Mr. Grey. "You should get some accountant to examine the cheques."

"When I remember how easy it was to deceive some really clever men as to the evidence of my marriage," began Mr. Scarborough— So the squire began, but then stopped himself with a shrug of his shoulders. Among the really clever men who had been easily deceived Mr. Grey was, if not actually first in importance, foremost at any rate in name.

"The truth may be ascertained," Mr. Grey repeated, almost with a scowl of anger upon his brow.

"Well, yes; I suppose it may. It will be difficult in opposition to Mr. Samuel Hart."

"You must satisfy yourselves at any rate. These men will know that they have no other hope of getting a shilling."

"It is a little hard to make them believe anything," said the squire. "They fancy, you know, that if they could get a hold of Mountjoy, so as to have him in their hands when the breath is out of my body and the bonds are really due—that then it may be made to turn out that he was really the heir."

"We know that it is not so," said Mr. Grey. At this Augustus smiled blandly.

"We know. But it is what we can make Mr. Samuel Hart know. In truth, Mr. Samuel Hart never allows himself to know anything—except the amount of money which he may have at his bankers. And it will be difficult to convince Mr. Tyrrwhit. Mr. Tyrrwhit is assured that all of us, you, and I, and Mountjoy, and Augustus, are in a conspiracy to cheat him and the others."

"I don't wonder at it," said Mr. Grey.

"Perhaps not," continued the squire; "the circumstances, no doubt, are suspicious. But he will have to find out his mistake. Augustus is very anxious to pay these poor men their money. It is a noble feeling on the part of Augustus; you must admit that, Mr. Grey." The irony with

which this was said was evident in the squire's face and voice. Augustus only quietly laughed. The attorney sat as firm as death. He was not going to argue with such a statement or to laugh at such a joke. "I suppose it will come to over a hundred thousand pounds."

"Eighty thousand, I should think," said Augustus. "The bonds amount to a great deal more than that—twice that."

"It is for him to judge," said the squire, "whether he is bound by his honour to pay so large a sum to men whom I do not suppose he loves very well."

"The estate can bear it," said Augustus.

"Yes, the estate can bear it," said the attorney. "They should be paid what they have expended. That is my idea. Your son thinks that their silence will be worth the money."

"What makes you say that?" demanded Augustus.

"Just my own opinion."

"I look upon it as an insult."

"Would you be kind enough to explain to us what is your reason for wishing to do this thing," asked Mr. Grey.

"No, sir; I decline to give any reason. But those which you ascribe to me are insulting."

"Will you deny them?"

"I will not assent to anything—coming from you, nor will I deny anything. It is altogether out of your place as an attorney to ascribe motives to your clients. Can you raise the money so that it shall be forthcoming at once? That is the question."

"On your father's authority, backed by your signature, I imagine that I can do so. But I will not answer as a certainty. The best thing would be to sell a portion of the property. If you and your father will join, and Mountjoy also with you, it may be done."

"What has Mountjoy got to do with it?" asked the father.

"You had better have Mountjoy also. There may be some doubt as to the title. People will think so after the tricks that have been played." This was said by the lawyer; but the squire only laughed. He always showed some enjoyment of the fun which arose from the effects of his own scheming. The legal world, with its entails, had endeavoured to dispose of his property, but he had shown the legal world that it was not an easy task to dispose of anything in which he was concerned.

"How will you get hold of Mountjoy?"

asked Augustus. Then the two older men only looked at each other. Both of them believed that Augustus knew more about his brother than anyone else. "I think you had better send to Mr. Annealey and ask him."

"What does Annealey know about him?" asked the squire.

"He was the last person who saw him, at any rate in London."

"Are you sure of that?" said Mr. Grey.

"I think I may say that I am. I think, at any rate, that I know that there was a violent quarrel between them in the streets, a quarrel in which the two men proceeded to blows, and that Annealey struck him in such a way as to leave him for dead upon the pavement. Then the young man walked away, and Mountjoy has not been heard of, or, at least, has not been seen since. That a man should have struck such a blow, and then, on the spur of the moment, thinking of his own safety, should have left his opponent, I can understand. I should not like to be accused of such treatment myself, but I can understand it. I cannot understand that the man should have been missing altogether, and that then he should have held his tongue."

"How do you know all this?" asked the attorney.

"It is sufficient that I do know it."

"I don't believe a word of it," said the squire.

"Coming from you, of course I must put up with any contradiction," said Augustus. "I should not bear it from anyone else," and he looked at the attorney.

"One has a right to ask for your authority," said his father.

"I cannot give it. A lady is concerned whose name I shall not mention. But it is of less importance, as his own friends are acquainted with the nature of his conduct. Indeed, it seems odd to see you two gentlemen so ignorant as to the matter which has been a subject of common conversation in most circles. His uncle means to cut him out from the property."

"Can he too deal with entails?" said the squire.

"He is still in middle life, and he can marry. That is what he intends to do, so much is he disgusted with his nephew. He has already stopped the young man's allowance, and swears that he shall not have a shilling of his money if he can help it. The police for some time

were in great doubt whether they would not arrest him. I think I am justified in saying that he is a thorough reprobate."

"You are not at all justified," said the father.

"I can only express my opinion, and am glad to say that the world agrees with me."

"It is sickening, absolutely sickening," said the squire, turning to the attorney. "You would not believe now——"

But he stopped himself. "What would not Mr. Grey believe?" asked the son.

"There is no one knows better than you that after the row in the street, when Mountjoy was I believe the aggressor, he was again seen by another person. 'I hate such deceit and scheming.' Here Augustus smiled. "What are you sniggering there at, you blockhead?"

"Your hatred, sir, at deceit and scheming. The truth is that when a man plays a game well, he does not like to find that he has any equal. Heaven forbid that I should say that there is rivalry here. You, sir, are so pre-eminently the first, that no one can touch you." Then he laughed long, a low, bitter, inaudible laugh, during which Mr. Grey sat silent.

"This comes well from you," said the father.

"Well, sir; you would try your hand upon me. I have passed over all that you have done on my behalf. But when you come to abuse me, I cannot quite take your words as calmly as though there had been no—shall I say antecedents? Now about this money. Are we to pay it?"

"I don't care one straw about the money. What is it to me? I don't owe these creditors anything."

"Nor do I."

"Let them rest then, and do the worst they can. But upon the whole, Mr. Grey," he added, after a pause, "I think we had better pay them. They have endeavoured to be insolent to me, and I have, therefore, ignored their claim. I have told them to do their worst. If my son here will agree with you in raising the money, and if Mountjoy—as he, too, is necessary—will do so, I too will do what is required of me. If eighty thousand pounds will settle it all, there ought not to be any difficulty. You can enquire what the real amount would be. If they choose to hold to their bonds, nothing will come of it. That's all."

"Very well, Mr. Scarborough. Then I shall know how to proceed. I understand that Mr. Scarborough, junior, is an assenting

party!" Mr. Scarborough, junior, signified his assent by nodding his head.

"That will do, then; for I think that I have a little exhausted myself." Then he turned round upon his couch as though he intended to slumber. Mr. Grey left the room and Augustus followed him; but not a word was spoken between them. Mr. Grey had an early dinner, and went up to London by an evening train. What became of Augustus he did not enquire, but simply asked for his dinner and for a conveyance to the train. These were forthcoming, and he returned that night to Fulham.

"Well!" said Dolly, as soon as she had got him his slippers and made him his tea.

"I wish with all my heart I had never seen anyone of the name of Scarborough."

"That is of course—but what have you done?"

"The father has been a great knave. He has set the laws of his country at defiance and should be punished most severely. And Mountjoy Scarborough has proved himself to be unfit to have any money in his hands. A man so reckless is little better than a lunatic. But compared with Augustus they are both estimable amiable men. The father has ideas of philanthropy, and Mountjoy is simply mad. But Augustus is as dishonest as either of them, and is odious also all round." Then at length he explained all that he had learned, and all that he had advised, and at last went to bed combatting Dolly's idea that the Scarboroughs ought now to be thrown over altogether.

HATS OFF!

It has been formally set down in the records of the House of Commons, that the Queen's Message respecting the marriage of the Duke of Albany was "brought up and read, all members being uncovered." But everyone knows that it was not so, that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the members for Leicester, Ipswich, and Falkirk failed to respect the custom of the Commons on such occasions. We have the Speaker's word for it that this violation of etiquette "must have been due to inadvertence," although neither of the gentlemen concerned in the "hat incident" said as much on his own behalf. Some of their friends sought to palliate their infraction of Parliamentary rules by asserting that certain ex-ministers had

offended in the same way a few nights before; but Sir Richard Cross proved that himself and his colleagues were better acquainted with the usages of the House than their accusers; and by putting the Speaker to the question, elicited the information that the rule requiring Messages from the Crown to be received by members with heads uncovered did not apply to answers or addresses brought down by the Controller, but only to messages under the sign-manual, read by the Speaker from the Chair.

This is not the only instance during the present reign of the serenity of the House being disturbed by the hat question; a like hubbub was raised forty-five years ago, upon the very first occasion of the House of Commons receiving a message from Her Majesty Queen Victoria. When Lord John Russell appeared at the bar on the 21st. of June, 1837, to deliver a Message from the Crown, in spite of the cries of "Hats off!" and the Speaker's intimation that members must uncover, Sir James Graham did not bare his head, until Lord John had got well on with his reading. Next day he explained that he meant no disrespect either to the Crown or the House, but had acted in strict accordance with old usage, which decreed that members should remain covered until they heard the word *Rex* or *Regina* pronounced, and for that he had waited. The Speaker admitted that the member for East Cumberland was in the right as to the practice of the House, and excused his own apparent deviation from the rules; on the score of desiring to save time and preserve order.

Cromwell flung his hat on his head when he pronounced sentence of extinction on the Long Parliament; Major Harrison took off his hat very ceremoniously as he approached the Speaker, bowed low, and kissing his hand took possession of it, and handed him out of the House, "as a gentleman does a lady, the whole House following." Chancellor Seafield made no such pretence of politeness in dismissing the last national Parliament held in Scotland. He put on his hat, saying, "There is an end of an auld sang!"

An Elizabethan versifier sang:

Before the Prince none covered are,
But those that to themselves go bare.

A couplet Charles the Second might have repeated for the behoof of Quaker Fox, who, being admitted to the royal presence, did not remove his broad-brim; where-

upon the Merry Monarch doffed his own head-gear, impelling Fox to say, "Put on thy hat, Friend Charles," and his majesty to retort, "Not so, Friend George, it is usual for only one man to be covered here." Penn was as obstinate on the hat question as Fox himself. On returning to his father's house, after serving a term of imprisonment, the old vice-admiral, anxious, if possible, to be friendly with his son, offered to ensure that he should not be molested for his practices or opinions, provided he would promise to uncover to the king, the Duke of York, and himself. After considering the matter for some days William informed his father that he could not agree to any species of hat-worship, and the irate admiral forthwith ordered him out of his house.

Not always have the "Friends" proved so staunch. Recounting his experience as one of a deputation of Presbyterian, Baptist, and Independent ministers, going to congratulate George the Fourth on his accession to the throne, Dr. Leifchild says: "While waiting there we saw a small deputation of Quakers advancing with an address, which one of their number held before him on a frame. One of the pages coming towards them to remove their hats, Dr. Waugh, who loved a joke, said to the foremost Quaker in an audible whisper, 'Persecution, brother!' to which the brother significantly replied, while pointing upwards, 'Not so bad to take off the hat as the head!'"

A grandee of Spain is privileged to wear his hat in his sovereign's presence for a certain time, carefully graduated according to his rank. John de Courcy, the conqueror of Ulster, won the same boon from King John by frightening the knights sent by Philip of France to call John to account for the murder of Arthur, out of the field; and then giving a taste of his quality by placing his helmet on a post, and cleaving it through with his sword, the weapon defying anyone but its owner to draw it out of the post again. This stalwart champion's descendants were wont to assert their privilege by keeping their heads covered for a moment or so in the royal presence; but at one of George the Third's Drawing-Rooms, the then Lord of Kinsale chose to wear his head-gear so long that the old king's attention was drawn to his unmannerly bravado. "The gentleman," said he, "has a right to be covered before me, but

even King John could give him no right to be covered before ladies."

At the trial of Mrs. Turner as an accessory to the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, Sir Edward Coke ordered the prisoner to remove her hat, saying: "A woman may be covered in church, but not when arraigned in a court of justice." The accused tartly commenting on the singularity that she might wear her hat in the presence of God, but not in the presence of man, Coke replied, "For the reason that man with weak intellects cannot discover the secrets which are known to God; and, therefore, in investigating truth, where human life is in peril, and one is charged with taking life from another, the court should see all obstacles removed. Besides, the countenance is often an index to the mind, and accordingly it is fitting that the hat should be removed, and therewith the shadow which it casts upon your face." Mrs. Turner's hat was taken off, but she was allowed, for modesty's sake, to cover her hair with a kerchief.

Chief Justice Glynn did not find the Quakers so amenable to the order of the court, when at Launceston Assizes, in 1656, they made their first public protest against uncovering the head. Upon Fox and his companions in misfortune being brought into court, the judge bade them put off their hats. Instead of obeying, Fox asked for a scriptural instance of a magistrate commanding prisoners to put off their hats. The Chief Justice enquired in return if hats were mentioned at all in the Bible! "Yes," answered Fox, "in the third of Daniel, where thou mayest read that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command, with their coats, their hose, and their hats on. Here was a proof that even a heathen king allowed men to wear hats in his presence." Not condescending to argue the matter further, Glynn cried, "Take them away, gaoler," and they were taken away, and thrust among thieves "a great while." When Penn and other Quakers appeared at the Old Bailey to answer their delinquencies, they entered the court covered, somebody removing their hats for them. Upon fairly getting inside, the court directed them to put their hats on, and no sooner had they done so than the Recorder demanded if they did not know they were in a king's court! Penn replied that he knew it was a court, and supposed it to be the king's, but he did not think putting off a hat showed any respect; whereupon he

was fined forty marks, and remarked that he and his friends had come into court uncovered, and in putting on their hats again they had only obeyed orders, therefore if anyone was to be fined, it ought to be the Bench. We suppose the Mine Court of the Forest of Dean was not a king's court, since witnesses before it were permitted to keep their caps on while giving their evidence, that is, if they claimed to be "free miners."

Jewish congregations worship with their heads covered; so do the Quakers, although St. Paul's injunctions on the matter are clearly condemnatory of the practice. The Puritans of the Commonwealth would seem to have kept their hats on whether preaching or being preached to, since Pepys notes hearing a simple clergyman exclaiming against men wearing their hats in the church; and a year afterwards (1662) writes: "To the French Church in the Savoy, and there they have the Common Prayer-Book, read in French, and which I never saw before, the minister do preach with his hat off, I suppose in further conformity with our church." William the Third rather scandalised his church-going subjects by following Dutch custom, and keeping his head covered in church, and when it did please him to doff his ponderous hat during the service, he invariably donned it as the preacher mounted the pulpit stairs. When Bossuet, at the age of fourteen, treated the gay sinners of the Hôtel de Rambouillet to a midnight sermon, Voltaire sat it out with his hat on, but uncovering when the boy-preacher had finished, bowed low before him, saying: "Sir, I never heard a man preach at once so early and so late."

As a token of respect, uncovering the head is one of the oldest of courtesies. Says an ancient rhyme:

If you any good man or woman meet,
Avail thy hood to him or her
And bid "God-speed dame or fere."

Shakespeare's Osric takes no heed of Hamlet's suggestion that he should put his bonnet to its proper use, "'tis for the head;" and when urged again to cover, replies: "Nay, in good faith, for mine ease, in good faith." Massinger's Well-born meeting Marrall in the open country, asks him, "Is't for your ease you keep your hat off?" And that worshipper of the rising sun answers:

Ease, and it like your worship!
I hope Jack Marrall shall not live so long,
To prove himself such an unmannerly beast,
Though it hail hazel-nuts, as to be covered
When your worship's present.

In Charles the First's time, even the ladies doffed their head-gear in salutation. The writer of Will Bagnall's Ballet says:

Both round and short they wear their hair,
Whose length should woman grace;
Loose, like themselves, their hats they wear,
And when they come in place,
Where courtship and compliments must be,
They do it, like men, with cap and knee.

Lamenting the decay of respect to age, Clarendon tells us that in his young days he never kept his hat on his head before his elders, except at dinner. A curious exception, that, to modern notions of politeness, but it was the custom to sit covered at meals down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Sir John Finett, deputy master of the ceremonies at the Court of King James the First, was once much puzzled as to whether the Prince of Wales should sit covered or no at dinner in the presence of the sovereign, when a foreign ambassador was one of the guests; since the latter, as the representative of a king, was not expected to veil his bonnet. Giving James a hint of his difficulty, his majesty disposed of it when the time came, by uncovering his head for a little while, an example all present were bound to follow; and then, putting on his hat again, he requested the prince and the ambassador to do likewise.

"Hats need not be raised here," so, it is said, runs a notice in one of Nuremberg's streets. "Hats must be raised here," should have been inscribed on the Kremlin gateway, where a government official used to stand to compel passers-by to remove their hats, because, under that gate, the retreating army of Napoleon withdrew from Moscow. Whether the regulation is in force at this day, is more than we know.

The stockbrokers of New York have a hat-etiquette of their own, forbidding the wearing of a white hat when summer is over. How the rule is enforced may be learned from the following extract from a New York journal: "Wednesday last was 'White Hat Day' on the Stock Exchange. Formal notice had been given early in the week that at noon yesterday all summer 'tiles' would be 'called in,' but many of the members either forgot or disregarded the warning, and suffered in consequence. William Heath was the first victim. About one p.m. he entered the Exchange in a brown study, with his thumbs thrust in the arm-holes of his waistcoat. In a moment his tall white hat was whirling in the air, and as it touched the ground twenty brokers jumped upon it. This sort of

diversion was kept up the whole afternoon. Whenever a person entered wearing the proscribed head-gear, a shout went up, and before the alarmed broker could run the gauntlet, his hat was crushed out of shape." Before the afternoon was over a third of the brokers "on the floor" were bare-headed, and dozens of white hats ornamenting the gas brackets. In the evening the neighbouring hatters drove a brisk trade, and had golden reasons for blessing the institution of White Hat Day.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

IV.

FOR a solid sturdy Scotch burgh commend us to Linlithgow, with its winding streets of grey-stone houses, its little shops undeveloped as yet into plate-glass fronts. Here is an ancient fountain whose trickle makes quite a stir in the profound stillness of the street. There is the little dusty untidy "plas" in front of the town-hall, with another fountain of the dry and dusty order, and a few loiterers of the gaberlunzie class lounging in the portico. A little beyond are county buildings, trim and grim of the newest style of architecture, and it requires a strong effort of imagination, although imagination is assisted and re-enforced by a memorial tablet in the wall of the said county buildings, to picture the street in its ancient aspect, the crowds of spectators, the stately train of the Regent Murray riding proudly through the press, the shot ringing out clear above the confused shouting of the crowd, the burst of horror that follows as the Regent falls heavily to the ground, the ring of horses' hoofs as the assassin madly gallops away.

But turn your back upon the High Street, and taking the town-hall in flank, mount the hill leading to the church and palace, and you come upon a really charming picture. It is the old world back again. A gateway of ancient pattern, with oval meurtrières looking out on each side, from which you would hardly be surprised to see protruded an arquebuse or match-lock, with a glimpse of a green sward through the open portals and the mellow stonework of the ancient palace, grouped with which is a venerable and yet graceful church of a fine florid Gothic, all seen in the stillness of a summer morning in a setting of rich foliage, while birds are chirping softly from the branches that wave over the quiet grave-yard.

Nor is the charm in any way lessened as

we enter the green court-yard of the palace. Square and fair rises the palace before us.

Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland far beyond compare,
Linlithgow is excelling.

No, there is nothing like Linlithgow, no such mediæval palace touched with the grace of the Renaissance, a palace that has not forgotten to be a fortress, and yet that rather suggests the rustle of women's robes than the stern clash of arms. And the turf is green, and the trees whisper softly in the breeze, and quiet paths lead down to a charming little loch with boats upon it, and swans, and the reflection of the green hills making a pleasant sheen upon its surface.

It is early yet, and the palace gates are not open till ten, but from the pleasant little park—they call it the Peel—we have a view of the former grand front of the palace, with its protecting bastions, and, high above, the now inaccessible grand entrance, with its quaint elaborate carvings, its niches for statues, and its loop-holes for musketry, with not a morsel left of the lofty drawbridge that once gave access to it.

Jennie tries to take a sketch of it while we are waiting, but gives up the attempt in despair, and in revenge pronounces the ensemble of the palace stiff and raide, with no variety of outline to tempt the artist. But there is a wonderful colour about the place nevertheless, especially when seen as now in a setting of dark lurid clouds. For the day has become overcast. There is a muttering of thunder in the air, and heavy rain drops patter among the trees. We have to make for shelter, and just then appears the custodian of the palace, and we follow him through the ancient gateway, with its darksome deserted guard-room, and its grooves for the iron-bound portcullis, while he throws open the gates with something of an air, as he proclaims the palace open for the day.

The first effect on entering is charming; a silent quadrangle, with a centre of mossy turf now shining with the most vivid green in the lurid light of the threatening storm, a sweet old broken fountain in the middle, all overgrown with weeds and wild flowers. The walls all about, with blank eyeless windows and a sad desolate aspect, are brightened in the sulphurous glow, while the gloomy interior assumes a deeper darker shadow. Thunder rolls sullenly in the distance, while pigeons, snowy-white

against the black clouds, flutter from one pinnacle to another, and the corbies croak dismally about the grass-grown ramparts.

"Will there not be danger, think you?" asks Mrs. Gillies of the janitor—pronounced "johnnytur," and real Scotch and not Latin as you might imagine. "Will there not be danger among these high walls in a thunderstorm?"

"Oh, mem," cries the janitor reassuringly, "ye'll be far safer here than anywhere else. Would the lightning touch these auld towers, d'ye think, that it's spared these three or four hundred year?"

There was a certain weakness in this argument. In fact it might just as well have been urged that the old building's turn had about come round, and that it might reasonably expect to be struck any minute. Only a weak argument often is more effective than a strong one, especially where women are concerned, and Mrs. Gillies, reassured as to her personal safety, ventures to ascend one of the broad stone staircases into the grand hall, where parliaments have been held, and where kings have feasted with all their chivalry. All is ruin; roofs and floorings have disappeared, but the masonry is strong and substantial as ever, the vaulted pavement as firm to the tread as when it rang under the armed heels of the Scottish cavaliers of old. And there, in one of the oldest portions of the palace, is the room where Mary was born—the hapless Mary Stuart—with the handsomely wrought stone fireplace, and the naked windows that look out upon the green court-yard and the silent fountain, but all open to the sky and to the driving shower that just now sets in.

For this palace was the favourite dwelling place of Mary's mother, Mary of Guise, a sister of the famous duke of that ilk, the great Catholic champion. And one does not wonder at her choice—so pleasant the site, warm and sunny, and with a soft fertile country about it, that might remind her of her native land.

But the place has memories also of another queen. An English princess this—Margaret Tudor.

A winding staircase takes you in perfect safety to the lofty battlements, and from the battlements higher still to a look-out tower, which still bears the name of Margaret's Bower. Here it is said was a favourite resort of Queen Margaret, and here she sat and watched, expecting to see her husband and his train ride over the hill, and wondering why they tarried so

long. Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey? And the answer was the fatal news of Flodden, where the king and the flower of his nobility were lying stark and cold.

Anyhow, the view from Margaret's Bower is a charming one—hill and dale, glittering loch and sparkling stream all seen in bright sunshine, while the threatening thunder-clouds have drawn off, and are clustered in grand masses on the horizon. Below us the grassy ramparts and ruined walls, the hundred hearths that are all cold this day, the chimneys where the corbies have built their nests.

It is time to say good-bye to the palace, and we leave it with regret. There is still the church to be seen, but there may be some difficulty about that, the janitor opines. Perhaps there is a slight jealousy between palace and church, for our friend darkly hints of difficulties to be encountered before we attain our object. "The good lady who keeps the key lives somewhere in the toon, but it isn't always that she's in the way. But to-morrow, noo, she'll surely be there on the morrow, when there are four hundred cheap trippers coming into the toon."

"Four hundred extra people to be squeezed into this little town. And what will you do with them all?"

"Oh, they'll enjoy themselves fine," said the warder. "They'll climb all over the place, and run races in the Peel, and paddle about in the boats."

Just then a shadow crossed the ancient gateway—the gateway that leads into the common workaday world, out of this enchanted palace, where soft repose and peaceful decay seem to reign, in the absence of cheap trippers. "My! but you're in luck," cried the janitor, "for there she goes, the woman with the key."

But when we got outside, and into the church porch, the woman had disappeared, and the door of the church appeared still to be locked. And so we wandered round the grave-yard admiring the details of this fine old church, and presently came upon a man who was digging a grave, deep in loose friable soil, that must contain the dust of so many generations. And the grave-digger had seen what he thought was the figure of the church-keeper cross the path, and if she was not in the church, well, she must have flown over it.

And she was in the church after all, and not the deaf sour-looking old dame we had pictured her, but a pleasant well-favoured

body, who, busy with dusting and cleaning, had yet time for a word or two with her visitors. Like most of the old Scotch churches too large for present uses, the east end is walled off from the rest, and devoted to the worship of the Presbyterian kirk, all very neat and trim with pulpit and pew, and a gallery with a fine organ, and the royal arms in front. "Yon's the Royal pew," says the dame with something of respectful awe. Not that Royalty has ever sat there, "not since Jamie's time, unless it were a good while gone, when some duchess came over and stayed the service." But there is the pew waiting for the Royal Family, all duly dusted and polished by the careful hands of the goodwife.

"And if ye'll come this way," continued the dame in a tone of conviction, "I'll show you where the king got his warning before Flodden." This was in the transept of the church, the south transept, where there is good florid window-tracery, and where are kept relics of "papeestical days"—a broken shrine, a ruined pulpit of stone. "'Twas a veession mebbe," says the dame, "or perhaps 'twas the queen sent somebody, for ye'll mind there was a warning against strange women."

But it is all written down in Scott's Marmion, and we have no time to linger any longer, except for a glance at the fine old nave, which is utilised as a Sunday school, and then away to the station.

For some little time I have felt sure that Uncle Jock has got a scheme in his head. He has been sending off letters and telegrams quite surreptitiously, and not business ones either, for about affairs at St. Mary's Axe Jock is as open as the day. And now it comes out as we walk up to the station. As well as his niece Jennie, who is his brother's daughter, he has a nephew, a sister's son—a sister who married a Grant, of Longashpan, or something near it—spelling not guaranteed. And this young fellow has been doing great things at the Glasgie University, taken his LL.B., or perhaps other more distinguished initials, and is bound to become an advocate before the Court of Session. He is not an advocate so far, but as yet in a chrysalis stage as law-clerk to Cannie and Cuttie, of Glasgie aforesaid.

"And wouldn't it be much more sensible," asked Jock, jingling the keys in his pocket, "if Jennie would take up with a lad like yon instead of a mere feckless artist body that would never be worth salt to his porridge?"

Now, Archie Grant, for that was the laddie's name, was safe to make himself a position in the world, and Uncle Jock, who was never likely himself to marry, would, as he modestly put it, give the young people a helping hand.

All this was preliminary to saying that he had asked young Grant, it being a leisure time in Glasgow just now, to join his uncle's party for a few days just to make Jennie's acquaintance, and he was to meet them that afternoon—he and his sister Mary—at Callander. And so Uncle Jock had determined to push on at once without stopping to visit Stirling, as he knew it was my intention to do.

Perhaps I was not altogether pleased at this intimation. I wonder what Uncle Jock thought I saw in him that I should smile at his jokes and put up with his Scotch stories, or why I should run here and there for Mrs. Gillies, and make myself a sort of walking guide-book for them all, if it were not that I had a sort of tenderness for Jennie. I had a great mind to turn sulky and pronounce for a circular tour on my own account. But there was something in the mention of Sister Mary that made me pause. If here were a real nice Highland lassie, now, it might reconcile me to Jennie's defection. So I promised Jock to meet them all at dinner that night, and after waiting a while, sitting on a rather uncertain board on the shabby little platform, our train came up, well filled with travellers, and we all got in in various carriages as there was room for us.

In my carriage there were two widows. And here I would make a remark upon the number of widows in Scotland. You meet them everywhere, nice bright-eyed creatures of all ages, and you can't help wondering how it is there should be a so much greater mortality of husbands than of wives. A friend, who is decorated with a blue ribbon, suggests that it is the whisky that causes such havoc among the men, while the females conduct themselves practically on temperance principles. Uncle Jock avers that it is the women's tongues that worry their partners into premature graves. But I am bound to say that this is a cause that would be equally operative south of the Tweed, where we don't notice—pace Mr. Weller, senior—any such superabundance. Anyhow here are two Scotch widows, the elder bright and stirring, with a nice Scotch accent, a purling and lingering over the words, as if they were sweet in the mouth, and a good

stress upon the last syllable. "If ye buy your tea from Dannie and Daffie," she is remarking to her companion, who is much more reticent and slightly scornful in manner, "ye'll be surprised how much better it tastes than the stuff ye buy at the sma' shops."

"I never go to small shops," replies the other rapidly and disdainfully, "and I always get my tea from MacVitties, whom everybody allows to be the only merchant who sells good tea." "I'm making no reflections, my dear, on other people's tea," replied the first widow in a conciliatory manner; "only for myself there's none I like better than Dannie and Daffie; and, indeed, all their things are good. There's eau de Cologne noo, did ye ever try their eau de Cologne? Give me your handkerchief, my dear." My dear indignantly snatched hers away. "Will ye try a little on your handkerchiefs, gentlemen?" said the widow, looking round with undiminished sweetness. Could anybody refuse? And then widow the second remarked in clear and cutting accents: "Some of their things may be good—their lavender-water, for instance, is not amiss, but their eau de Cologne, Mr. Dannie himself told me he could not recommend." There was general consternation at this, and even the amiable one looked vexed. "Well, and that is a curious thing to say, and they make it themselves." But presently she recovered her graciousness. "Well, there's their sweetmeat now, nothing can be better than their sweetmeat; now try one, my dear. Do, gentlemen, try a sweetmeat." Again could any one refuse? Heavens! what a powerful dose, taken innocently into the mouth as a morsel of preserved ginger! Surely all the biting condiments of the East had been boiled down into that morsel of ginger. The young widow immediately shot hers out of the window, but others were sandwiched in the middle of the carriage, and that resource was denied them. "Oh, there's nobody like Dannie and Daffie for sweetmeat," repeated the widow confidently and sweetly.

By this time we are at Falkirk, a district abounding in ironworks and tall chimneys, but presently we are out of the reek, and the bold outlines of the Ochill hills rise before us, green and yet desolate. And then somebody calls out Bannockburn, and we look out upon a station almost smothered in roses. But the battle-field is a mile and a half away. Still it is something to cross the burn itself that once ran

red with the blood of our countrymen. But in a few minutes we are in Stirling, and I in the bustle of the station taking a hasty but only temporary farewell of the Gillies family. "I don't see why I shouldn't see Stirling with you," says Jennie, rather inclined to be mutinous. "But you've seen enough for one day, Jennie," cries Uncle Jock determinedly.

Stirling is a bright and handsome town, without anything specially interesting about it till you mount the hill towards the castle, when half-way up the old church of Greyfriars presents itself invitingly before you. Square, solid, and grey, it retains a certain stately dignity as becomes a church where kings have been crowned, and where he who never feared the face of man, as was said of John Knox, has thundered out his discourse. Close by is a queer quaint Guildhall with a delightful old-fashioned guardian, one of the good old kind who has a perfect faith in all she has to show. "There ye'll find the chair the king was crooned in, and yon's John Knox's pulpit, and there's the auld toon weights—ye'll see a pun weighed as much as twa of ours, and yon's the stand for the hour-glass they had for the preaching, and yon's a hat that was worn i' the crusades," and so on. The hall itself was built by Robert Spittall, tailor to the most noble Princess Margaret, the queen of James the Fourth: that Margaret whom we have seen on the lookout from her lofty bower at Linlithgow, for the return from Flodden.

Just below the church, and seeming to belong to it, is a fragment of ancient and elaborate building known to this day as Mar's Work, the commencement of a palace for a Regent Mar, one of those innumerable regents so bewildering in Scottish history. It gives shelter at this present moment to a shabby man, who springs forward at the appearance of a stranger, and begins to recite a well-conned history of the place. And he wants to take me back over Greyfriars again, and among the monuments in the churchyard, about which I have been discreetly silent, as there are some enough to give anybody the nightmare. But now a drizzling rain is coming on, and I have no desire to see these things again, and so the shabby man darts upon somebody else.

The rain still continues, and the walk up the castle hill is rather bleak and unpleasant, when I spy a haven of refuge in the shape of a comfortable hotel bar. The young woman who presided over that bar was of a sensible and energetic sort: no

wet circles on her counter, no debris of dirty glasses, everything washed up to the current moment, while still the girl had time to set to rights the world about her. The rain went on dripping outside; while every now and then a detachment of men tramped past, to or from the castle, wrapped in their grey great-coats. A sergeant in white fatigue dress has taken refuge from the rain—refuge and a hauf glass of Islay or Glenlivet. "Don't spoil it with water, sergeant," cries the landlord, a veteran of three score and ten, while the landlady, a little younger, with mottled apple-red cheeks, stands with her arm affectionately round his neck. "Don't spoil it, sergeant; you may trust me to put the water to it first." The sergeant grins and takes off his hauf with relish. "Deed that reminds me of a mon, as wonst done something for the meenister, who offert him a glass o' whiskie." John was na slow at hanging on to that, and with that the meenister filled him a sma' oush o' sperrit and a bountiful supplee o' watter. "Mon John," said the meenister, who would be something of the T T perswashin, "mon, I question if I'm right to give ye sperrit. There's death i' that cup, John." And John tasted and set down again. "Deed, meenister, ye were graundly right when ye said there was death i' the cup, for be me soul, ye've drown'd the muller."

"Heck! heck!" laughed the old landlord, "ye must bring the miller to life again with another hauf glass, sergeant. Milly, fill a hauf glass for the sergeant." Milly complied, though reluctantly, murmuring that her grandfather would give away the coat off his back if he had nothing else to give, and the sergeant swallowed the dram rather shamefacedly, and hurried away as if to escape further hospitality. "Ye'll give my respects to Lizzie?" he added to a hasty farewell to those present. But Lizzie appeared next moment to receive the sergeant's respects in person—a wild-looking young Highland lassie, unkempt and rather tangled, like a heifer just fresh from mountain pastures, and she gave the sergeant a grip of the hand and danced about him with a joyous abandon that outraged Miss Milly's sense of discipline. "It wad be better ye'd wash yer face and come in to your work, Lizzie." And Lizzie dropped the sergeant's hand, and flinging her head back, advanced ready for battle. "Ye're no my mistress." And the old lady wagged her head, deprecating all hostilities. "Oh, she's a good girl—she's a

good girl, Lizzie; ye mustn't be hard upon Lizzie."

And with that the scene changed; the rain ceased and bright sunshine set everything in a glow and sparkle, while the grey ramparts of the castle glistened invitingly above. And so farewell to Lizzie and Milly and the bold sergeant, and hey for Stirling Castle with its memories of fact and fiction.

In the gateway I meet a vieille moustache, who is waiting there to act as guide, a fine intelligent fellow, who performs his descriptive duties something as if he were drilling a recruit. Leading the way through the outer defences he brings me into a fine open quadrangle. Here on the left you see the palace of James the Fifth. Observe the gratings on the windows and the strong fastenings. Those were put up in the time of James the Sixth, who passed his boyhood here, to save him from being surprised and carried off. His tutor, George Buchanan, lived below in the town. And then we turn to the Parliament House of the time of James the Third, and the Chapel Royal, built on the site of an older chapel by James the Sixth, in his manhood, but before he reached the crown of England.

Beyond, in the farthest and steepest corner of the enceinte is the most interesting part of the castle. A secluded garden is this, surrounded by ramparts and buildings, but where trees and shrubs grow bravely; there is one old holly-tree, still bright with last winter's berries, that must have seen stirring sights in its day. And looking upon this garden is the Douglas Room, where James the Second slew the Douglas with his own dagger. The room, as it now exists, is only a restoration of the original, which was burnt down some years ago; but the inner room, from the windows of which the body of the earl was thrown, is still in its original state. And there below, according to tradition, still lies the body of the murdered earl. But the pride of Stirling is in its ramparts and the magnificent view therefrom, and with conscious pride the old soldier leads the way to the corner of the ramparts known as the Queen's Look-out. But I must take breath before attempting to describe a scene that perhaps has not its equal in all this broad realm.

SONNET.

As some vast rock just parted from the shore
By little space of dimly-shadowed wave;
Seemeth to mock the angry storms that lave
Its strong dark breast that doth not heed the war,

Nor care for all the fearful seas that pour
 Their waters o'er it, as if ocean strave
 To draw him down to an uneasy grave
 Never to see the sunshine any more ;
 So would I, standing in life's bitter sea,
 In life's most awful moments of despair,
 Stand by unmoved a little from the land ;
 Safe in mine own heart's peace, my heart should be,
 And that wild sea that rages round should bear
 My burden for me ; if my home but stand.

UNMASKED.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

SUNDAY after Sunday, while the summer lasted, the Hansards, father, mother, son, and daughter, put off in a boat from their river-side lawn at Cookham, and pulled gently up to the foot of the Quarry Woods, where they landed for a walk to afternoon church at Cookham Dean. Old frequenters of the Thames as they were, they never tired of its placid waters, or grew impatient of its serenity.

To-day, in spite of the overpowering heat, their boat was to be seen creeping slowly up stream, finding a little shade now and again under the willows on the bank, but for the most part exposed to the full blaze of the early afternoon sun. It is true that General Hansard had suggested the advisability of remaining at home, but his son Robert had warmly repudiated a proposition so subversive of old-established custom, and had promised to row the whole way to their usual landing-place and back. Thus assured of his own immunity from work, the general had submitted, and was now dozing in the boat, while Mrs. Hansard kept just sufficiently awake to steer without making any egregious blunders, and Nettie, lying in the bows, dreamily regarded the sky, and the changing curve made against it by the high downs on her right, and the clumps of trees, and the low homesteads, as they caught in turn her meditative eye. She was taken aback when Robert, pausing in his labour, turned to her and observed in an aggrieved tone :

"I must say, Nettie, that when I undertook to do all the rowing, I did not reckon upon your doubling the work by putting all your weight into the bows. I call it heartless to lie there, and never so much as offer to go into the stern."

"Oh, Robert, why didn't you complain before?" said Nettie, sitting up and looking the picture of penitence. "I never thought of your finding it hard work."

"It's the state of the atmosphere," said Robert. "No, stay where you are now,

there's no sort of use in offering to move just as we are going to land."

"I had such faith in your herculean strength, you see," began Nettie, attempting to appease him by a compliment, but Robert interrupted her with brotherly incivility :

"That'll do, stick to your first excuse—you didn't think. And I do flatter myself that it was heroic on my part to toil on without a grumble. Get up and shake out your creases."

He brought the boat in to the bank, maliciously tossing back his sculls so as to splash their drippings over Nettie's dress.

"Oh, Robert my Sunday gown!" she exclaimed. "How mean of you!"

"As you indulge in Sunday idleness, sister mine, I really must beg of you to confine yourself to Sunday language," observed Robert as he handed his mother out of the boat. Nettie followed, laughing. She and Robert were the best of friends, and the time was distant indeed when their quarrels had ended seriously.

The Quarry Woods rise to some height directly from the water's edge, but of a summer day the relief from heat and glare afforded by their cool shadiness more than compensates for the steepness of the ascent. The Hansards, walking at a leisurely pace, emerged at length on to a piece of open sward, where it was their habit to make a halt. A tree, felled long ago, lay invitingly ready for tired wayfarers, and upon this they seated themselves. From this point lanes hedged in by tall black-berry bushes branch off to the right and left, while in front the ground falls rapidly away, only to rise again beyond, where a white chalk quarry is crowned by the village of Cookham Dean. The tiny church, not easily discernible by unpractised eyes, was doing its best now to attract attention by the tinkling of the magnified sheep-bell suspended in its tower, and in obedience to the summons the villagers, reinforced by many of the visitors staying in Marlow and Cookham, were flocking to the quiet service.

Suddenly the tinkling ceased.

"We are too late for church," said Nettie. "I knew we should be. Let us stay here, instead of going on and hurrying up the hill; it always looks so formidable from here." And indeed the white road skirting the quarry on the left, did, owing to the dip between it and the speaker, appear so sheerly precipitous that the people on it seemed gifted with an insect's power of ascending a perpendicular surface.

Nettie's proposal met with the approval of her parents, nor did Robert's energy suffice to prompt any renewal of expostulation on his part. Far from it, he resigned himself with evident content to the prospect of spending an idle afternoon.

Over the typically English landscape before them, the tranquil hazy air, silent save for the sibilant sounds never absent as a low accompaniment to summer heat, lay like an unlifted veil of holiness and peace. Nettie gave herself up to the spirit of the scene, and lost count of time as she watched the fitting of the clouds, the quivering of the leaves, the waving of the golden cornfields, and all the hundred signs that mark the coming and going of Nature's breath. At such times the mind offers no resistance to the inrush of external impressions; every sense drinks in the beauty of our fair green earth, while effortless thought, touching with the wings of a swift on subjects near and far, clothes the dry bones of our conscious perceptions with the rainbow tints of our unconscious fancy.

Nettie's reverie had lasted a long time when she was startled out of it by Robert, who, catching suddenly hold of her arm, demanded excitedly:

"Nettie, who is that—that lovely girl in white? Do you know her?"

"Who?" she asked, still only half alive to his words.

"Quick!" exclaimed Robert. "Look to your left, she will be out of sight in a moment!"

Nettie looked, and saw certainly the most beautiful human being that had ever appeared in flesh and blood before her young eyes. A girl rather older than herself was coming up the hill towards them in the company of a middle-aged lady, apparently her mother, and for a moment Nettie's beauty-worshipping mind was overpoweringly impressed by the vision of a face such as an angel might assume—tints of purest rose and white, eyes like sapphires, hair clustering in golden plenty round a low white forehead. Ah, the vision was over! the girl had turned her back upon the young enthusiasts and was walking slowly away.

"Oh, Robert, what a picture!" said Nettie.

"Who is she? Where does she come from?" asked her brother eagerly.

Nettie was unable to answer either question, but their curiosity was destined to be satisfied, for a minute or two later the ladies stood still, looked hesitatingly

about them, and finally came back to where the Hansards were seated.

With an apologetic blush the girl stopped before Mrs. Hansard and asked in a low pleasant voice:

"Can you tell us, please, if these are the Quarry Woods? We are new to the neighbourhood, and are afraid of losing our way."

"You are right so far," replied Mrs. Hansard, glancing critically at her questioner; "but it is hardly wise to enter the woods if you do not know your way. Do you wish to go to Marlow?"

"No, only for a walk. We live at Cookham Dean."

Robert had risen to his feet when the girl addressed his mother, and now, lifting his hat, he said with eager politeness:

"If you would allow me to accompany you, I could easily point out to you a safe path for a ramble."

Mrs. Hansard looked at her son in an astonishment not unmingled with displeasure. How, if he went off with these strangers, were they—his father, and mother, and sister—to get back to Cookham? Had he forgotten his promise?

Whether the two ladies noticed Mrs. Hansard's annoyance or not remained doubtful—at any rate, they ignored it as completely as did Robert.

"You are very kind," said the girl, directing at him one of the irresistible glances of which only eyes like hers know the secret.

Robert did not choose to wait for a possible remonstrance from his parents, but with a quick laugh, half-pleased, half-nervous, led the way for his new acquaintances.

Mrs. Hansard uneasily watched their retreating figures, and a shudder of apprehension passed through her, as she saw Robert help first the mother and then the daughter over the stile at the entrance to the woods.

The general, an easy-going man, had little sympathy with his wife's easily inflamed fears for the future.

"Robert's smitten," he remarked tranquilly.

"Really, general!" exclaimed Mrs. Hansard indignantly.

"What's the matter, my dear?"

"I wish you would not use such objectionable expressions."

"Very well; let us say that he has fallen prostrate before the shrine of beauty."

The general smiled, evidently pleased at the readiness with which this decidedly

commonplace phrase had occurred to him, but Mrs. Hansard continued to fidget.

"It is so thoughtless of Robert."

"But, mother, he will be back in a moment; he only went to show them the way," said Nettie soothingly. She herself had not been favourably impressed by the manner in which the strangers had literally carried her brother off, nor had the girl's beauty seemed of so unusual a type when offered for nearer inspection.

Another half-hour passed, and there was no sign of Robert. At last the general would wait no longer, and descending slowly through the woods to the riverside, he and his wife and daughter embarked without their recusant oarsman. After all, rowing down stream was not hard work now the worst of the heat was over, and Nettie, stripping off her gloves, and unbuttoning her tight sleeves, found herself easily capable of taking the boat down to Cookham. There was no hurry, no need for her to exert herself much, and so she pulled on idly and mechanically, wondering over Robert's strange behaviour. It seemed to her that the golden-haired girl was a kind of enchantress, who had been able, by a single dazzling glance, to cast a glamour over her steady simple brother. There had been something in his ordinarily impassive face, as he gazed at her, that was altogether new to Nettie. Was it prejudice, she wondered, that roused her dislike of the girl who could so influence Robert? Nettie was ashamed to acknowledge the antipathy with which she had for the first time in her life been inspired, and, with a liberality of mind peculiar to her, sought to argue herself out of it.

"At least," she resolved, "I will wait and see, and not judge hastily."

Mrs. Hansard did not take quite so philosophical a view of the matter, and when at length, much later in the evening, Robert reached home, and began hastily to apologise for his faithless treatment of them, she listened without allowing herself to be appeased.

"You do not improve matters by your excuses, Robert," she said stiffly; "but dropping that question for the moment, will you kindly tell me who and what these people are?"

"My dear mother, you don't suppose I pryed into their private affairs," returned Robert, laughing uncomfortably. "Of course I intended to come back in time to row you home, but I found that they were very bad hands at keeping their bearings,

and I simply couldn't leave them to get lost in the woods."

"Nonsense, Robert, as if on a Sunday afternoon they wouldn't have met plenty of people to direct them."

Young Hansard grew a little impatient.

"I have said I am sorry, mother, and can only repeat that I don't see how I could have acted differently."

"What is their name, Robert?" asked Nettie.

"Jackson. They have been living abroad, but have now come to Cookham Dean for good. They wanted a quiet country place, and have taken the cottage close to the church. It is very prettily situated, and furnished in exquisite taste, but I am afraid they will find it dull."

Mrs. Hansard looked up quickly.

"You went in, then?"

"Yes, mother; they asked me to take tea with them. I hope you will call there soon."

"I should like to know more about them first," returned his mother. "I cannot say that I am struck by their good breeding so far."

Robert gave a slight, almost imperceptible shrug of the shoulders, and left the room. Mrs. Hansard rose as if to follow him, but the general, who had as yet taken no part in the conversation, laid his hand upon her arm.

"Leave him alone, dear," he said; "he is not in the mood to be taken to task."

Mrs. Hansard submitted reluctantly, and the general continued:

"These things are best treated lightly, or even passed over entirely. You rouse his love of independence by opposing him. Besides, why shouldn't he make the acquaintance of a lovely girl like that? You know nothing against her."

"I know nothing about her either way," objected Mrs. Hansard.

"I should advise you to trust to Robert's good sense. He's a steady fellow."

The general's easy-going counsel did not suit Mrs. Hansard, who was really alarmed about her son. She, like Nettie, had noticed the expression of his face as he caught at the pretext for accompanying the Jacksons on their walk, and she could not but feel that the incident of to-day might have serious results.

CHAPTER II.

ROBERT'S conduct during the next few weeks was not calculated to allay his mother's anxiety. Too frank to keep his movements and doings a secret from

his family, he openly entered upon an intimacy with the Jacksons, visited them, met them out walking, lent them books, marked out their tennis-lawn for them, and gained them friends in the neighbourhood.

On all sides they were liked and well received. Mrs. Hansard alone held back and refused to call. At length Robert appealed confidentially to Nettie on their behalf, and so persuasively did she represent his wishes to her mother that Mrs. Hansard yielded, and consented with a sigh to the sacrifice of prejudice demanded of her. And at least—so she consoled herself—something would be gained: the means, namely, of forming a personal opinion upon the merits of this apparently irresistible mother and daughter.

It was with feelings of mingled curiosity and condescension that she alighted one afternoon before the low porch of Mrs. Jackson's cottage, and entered the drawing-room in which Robert made himself so much at home. Her quick investigating glance was not lost upon Mrs. Jackson, who smiled without resenting it. She was a handsome woman of about five-and-forty, well-dressed, and almost superfluously stylish in manner. There was nothing to which Mrs. Hansard could take exception either in the tastefully-furnished room or in its owner; on the contrary, she was pleasantly impressed, and found her own stiffness rapidly wearing off.

The conversation flowed easily and fluently. Mrs. Jackson appeared to be an exceptionally clever talker, and surprised her visitor by the interesting accounts she gave of foreign life.

"You know," she said with smiling frankness, "Rosalind and I have lived abroad, for economical reasons, ever since my husband's death. At last we have come back to dear old England, and hope we shall not find our fatherland ruin us. I should be sorry to have to leave here, for this little cottage suits us so well."

She turned to Nettie.

"Can you stay for a little tennis, Miss Hansard? We expect a few friends for a game presently. Our lawn is small, you see," she continued, opening the French window, and inviting her visitors into the garden; "but we manage to make it do. Ah, there is Rosalind!"

Once more Nettie was struck by the beauty of this girl, who had just come into the room behind them. In a white tennis-dress, drawn into folds under knots of pale

blue ribbon, Rosalind Jackson was an exquisite embodiment of youth and grace, and the slight start of surprise and blush of pleasure with which she recognised Mrs. Hansard, added greatly in that lady's eyes to the charm of her appearance.

"I did not know who it was," she said, "or I would have come down at once. Were you looking at our little bit of a garden? You cannot imagine what a delight it is to us. Every blossom is a new treasure."

The girl's voice was soft and her accent pure and correct. To Nettie it seemed studiously so, and suggestive of elocution-lessons, but who could object to a failing so obviously on the right side? There was no denying Rosalind's attractiveness. It lay not only in her appearance at first sight, but in the varying charm of her expression and demeanour, which, changing from bright to soft, from grave to gay, from quick to thoughtful, revealed new possibilities of manner to our quiet observant Nettie. Could it be quite natural, quite unconscious? A fresh doubt sprang up in her mind, but, even while she doubted, she was fascinated.

More visitors arrived, and the Hansards rose to leave.

"What do you think of them?" asked Mrs. Hansard of her daughter as they drove off together.

"I don't quite know," said Nettie slowly.

"They seem ladylike enough."

"Yes; and Miss Jackson is wonderfully pretty, mother."

"Indeed she is. I can't be surprised at Robert's admiring her; and yet it makes me uneasy. I wish I knew more about them."

"So do I," agreed Nettie; "they seem quite open and talk of Mr. Jackson's profession, and about their travels, and yet there is nothing to lay hold of, nothing to tell one definitely who they are."

"That didn't occur to me," returned Mrs. Hansard; "I confess I was agreeably disappointed. Why, there's Robert! Draw up by Mr. Robert, Wilson."

The coachman obeyed, and Mrs. Hansard leant out to speak to her son.

"Where are you off to?" she enquired.

"Mrs. Jackson's," he replied.

"I am getting accustomed to that answer," said Mrs. Hansard, shaking her head a little sadly. "Well, dear boy, I have done as you wished. I have been to call there."

"Thank you, mother," said Robert, pressing the hand she had laid on the

carriage door. "I hope it will lead to a closer acquaintance; Miss Jackson would be a delightful companion for Nettie; wouldn't she, old lady?"

Nettie, thus appealed to, involuntarily shook her head. She admired Miss Jackson, but stronger than the admiration was her instinctive perception that anything like intimacy was impossible between them. Without further trial she knew that in character they were radically different.

Robert was annoyed at her gesture and walked on abruptly. He was one of those young men, not very wise or discriminating, who indulge in wide generalisations about women, and who, among many opinions concerning them, include the ineradicable belief that one woman's bad opinion of another is in all cases prompted by jealousy. It annoyed Robert that his sister should not be above this petty feminine weakness.

"But they are all alike in that," he soliloquised as he strode on, blind to the far more obvious and reasonable theory that a woman is as much the best judge of her own sex as a man is of his. A man is apt to judge merely by what he sees in a girl; a woman goes deeper, and out of her own nature comprehends the motives at work. Nettie had made no mistake in suspecting Rosalind of artificiality, and it would have been well for Robert had he allowed her opinion to have more weight with him.

His heart beat fast as he reached the Jacksons' cottage, nor did Rosalind's reception of him tend to calm his pulses. A swift glance of welcome from the sapphire eyes, a blush on the soft cheeks, gave him to understand that his coming was not indifferent to her, and during the afternoon a hundred trivial signs seemed to betray her desire to please him. Not that she laid herself open to the disapproval of a single acquaintance present; for that she was far too skilful. He and he only was allowed to read and understand her manner, and with pride he noted the sweet and shyly-manifested signs of her regard. Twilight broke up the party, and still Robert lingered on. No doubt of this girl's truth rose within him, no fear of possible danger from her, no sense of anything strange about her or her mother, only an ardent longing to call her his.

And before he left her that night his avowal had found utterance, and Rosalind had promised to be his wife.

The news, hardly unexpected, was received by his parents and Nettie with very

doubtful satisfaction. The general called his son precipitate for embarking on an engagement after an acquaintance of less than six weeks. Mrs. Hansard hoped tearfully that he might be happy, while Nettie, chilled by an unconquerable sense of something wrong, raised her deep affectionate eyes to his face, with an unmistakable expression of anxiety in them as she faltered out her sisterly congratulations.

However, no interference was possible, for Robert, thanks to the bounty of his late grandfather, was completely his own master. In his exultant happiness the young man could not refrain from a few strong words on the want of sympathy shown him by his family, whereupon Mrs. Hansard recurred to her old objection that she knew hardly anything about Miss Jackson.

"Is that my fault?" demanded Robert, "or is it Miss Jackson's? If you had chosen she might have been intimate here by now, but you have held aloof, and given her no chance of winning your affection. Mother, for my sake be generous, and treat her now with all the warmth and kindness she will look for."

His appeal was not without effect, and Rosalind had no reason to complain of the Hansards' behaviour towards her. She was conscious, however, of the want of spontaneity in their friendliness, and set herself with much tact to overcome it, succeeding easily with the kindly general, and after a fashion with Mrs. Hansard, who confessed that she had no fault to find. With Nettie, Rosalind found her powers of attraction fail her entirely, for here she encountered a nature wholly antagonistic to her own, and impenetrably reserved. Nettie was polite but distant, conscious of a growing distrust in Rosalind, and worried by fears for her brother.

HOPE'S TRAGEDY.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER V.

BERTHA had no card, and was announced at once to Miss Hamilton, who was standing by the drawing-room fire, and had just taken her hat off. She looked young and handsome, with a touch of colour which the wind had given her. As Bertha came in, she was smiling at herself in the chimney-glass, and had put up both hands to stroke her disordered curls.

Bertha's name was quite as startling as she could have expected. Miss Hamilton

started, turned round, and gazed at her vaguely for a moment. Her first thought was, of course, the right one; then came a hasty doubt, for Mr. Hope's appearance had been very ornamental, and this young woman did not look as if she could be his sister—such a plain commonplace little creature, with a black hat of frightful shape rammed down over her nose, and a gown and jacket equally hideous and ordinary.

"What a creature! Nonsense! it can't be," thought Dora Hamilton; and then, as the figure advanced, she made a little bow and said: "Miss Hope? I think there must be some mistake; isn't there?"

"No, I think not, if you are Miss Hamilton," replied Bertha.

Something in the tone of her voice, which was very good and refined, told Dora that her first fear was realised. She coloured with annoyance and confusion, drew herself up haughtily, and murmured "Oh!" as a kind of question, regarding Bertha with unfriendly eyes.

"I have come to you, Miss Hamilton," said Bertha stiffly—she was too angry to be nervous—"to bring a message."

"Oh yes; from whom is it?"

"From my brother, of course."

"Your brother—Mr. Hope? You are Mr. Hope's sister? I ought to have known, but there is not much likeness," said Dora with a sudden change of tone, taking her visitor's hand and making her sit down near the fire.

"None at all," said Bertha, smiling grimly; "but you remember him? You are not astonished at his sending you a message?"

"No; I am glad he is well enough. He has been very ill, hasn't he?"

"Yes, very ill. It has been a hard fight, and we scarcely thought he would pull through. Perhaps—I don't know—the move down here may do him good, unless it does him the greatest harm, which I have feared all along."

Dora Hamilton's face was turned away towards the fire, and the look with which Bertha pointed her hint was lost upon her.

"Did you say he was here?" she asked in a low voice.

"He, my mother, and I are staying in Seaview Place. He is still terribly weak, but nothing would satisfy him but coming to Beachcliff, and as he lay at the window this afternoon, he saw you pass, and insisted on my going to you at once, and begging you to come and see him—now, he said. People in his state are unreasonable."

"What a pity he came!" said Dora, half to herself.

"So I thought, and now I am quite sure of it. And is your brother at home? Willie was anxious to see him about this insurance business."

"No; my brother is away. I don't know when he will be back—in a week I suppose. The insurance company is a dreadful disappointment, indeed," she said, looking round, and speaking in an odd hurried way. "I wish we had, none of us, ever had anything to do with it."

"Is it so bad as that?" said Bertha gravely.

"Oh, I suppose so; I don't know. I don't understand business, but Julius said to me that it was only a question of time. Of course they will hold on as long as they can. Don't tell your brother; it might stop his getting well. I don't suppose he knows how bad it is. In fact, please, you must not tell anybody."

"It is a very serious affair," began Bertha.

"Yes; but we shall not be quite ruined, I am glad to say. All mamma's fortune is quite safe. It is only Julius who will lose seriously."

"You must be thankful for that," said Bertha.

Her companion did not at all notice the bitterness in these words. Her head was too full of her own concerns to take in the commonplace remarks of poor Miss Hope.

"I hope your brother won't mind much, and will get over it," said Dora after a short silence.

"Get over what? His illness, his ruin, or the greatest trouble of all?"

There was no ignoring such a speech as this. Dora blushed scarlet, but did not seem angry at this plain-speaking. She had still a heart, poor thing, which would sometimes declare itself.

"Don't be unfair to me," said Dora, looking on the floor. "Of course you have only heard his side. But surely you knew it was conditional. Julius wouldn't let me write—he said it was so plainly impossible now, in this state of things. Then he was ill, and the future looked so confused, and I did not know what to say if I wrote. By-and-by, of course, when the smash comes, he must have had an answer if he asked for one. Things arrange themselves—I am sure I never dreamed how it would be—and I can't tell you everything. But he certainly understood the condition. I depend on mamma and Julius, and we couldn't anyhow have married without anything to live on."

"I dare say there was a condition, as you say," said Bertha, after patiently listening to this explanation. "No doubt it is as well for you to feel yourself free. Only Willie's idea was that you cared for him."

"So I did. I hardly dare to go and see him. I am the most miserable creature in the world."

"In the world!" Bertha did not exactly smile at this declaration, for she thought that in one sense of "the world" it might be true.

"You need not be afraid to see Willie," she said; "he is very weak, he will not tease you much, I think."

"Poor fellow, I should like to see him," hesitated Dora. "If you can promise me that he won't expect any explanations and things. I don't deny it, he has something to complain of; still he knew all along that I was not free."

"I think the sight of you will do him good," said Bertha, "if you will not say anything too hopeless and cruel. That, in his present state, might even kill him. Be kind and nice to him, and let him have a little hope if you can. I almost think you like him still."

Bertha was surprised to find herself pleading for her brother with this woman, whom she had set down as heartless. The fact was that Bertha could not always be consistent in her hardness and strength of character. She was Willie's sister, though his superior; she could be bewitched, like him; and by this time Dora Hamilton was attracting her strongly with the naturalness, frankness, almost humility, which matched so oddly with her stately bearing.

"Ah, you don't know, Miss Hope," said Dora; but then she quietly got up and put on her hat again. "I ought not; it is foolish—but I must," she said. "Yet what is the use of deceiving him?"

"Oh, I did not ask you to deceive him," said Bertha.

Dora only answered this by a sad little laugh.

"I will go with you now, if you like," she said.

In the fading light of the small room looking on the sea Mrs. Hope was sitting beside her son. He had hardly spoken since Bertha went out, but had lain there with his hollow eyes wide open, and bright spots in his cheeks which frightened his mother a little. She did not know Bertha's errand or the reason of his suspense, and she was hardly even aware two people were

coming softly upstairs, till Willie half lifted himself up, and put out his thin hand eagerly.

"You must let us be alone together," he said.

"You and Bertha?" said Mrs. Hope rather breathlessly; she thought for a moment that he was feverish again, and light-headed.

"No. Dora—of course, Dora."

Then Bertha was at the door, saying:

"She is come, Willie," and Willie suddenly struggled off the sofa to his feet, and made two steps towards the door, stopping to lean on the back of a chair, while Dora Hamilton followed his sister into the room.

She was met with no reproaches; those she need not have feared. He simply grasped her hand, and then let his mother, who saw that he was nearly falling, help him back to the sofa again. He lay and gazed at her in silence for a moment; they were all silent, for Dora could only look at him in horrified surprise. Could this wreck be the handsome popular Willie Hope of last year! the man whom she had actually promised (on conditions) to marry! The romantic recollections which had brought her to him were fading fast away. She had never liked sick people; she could imagine being quite afraid of a ghostly, hollow-eyed, desperate-looking creature like this, whose hand in holding hers seemed actually to scorch it. What mean little women! what a poor squalid room! thought Miss Hamilton, who had lately come to the conviction—in fact, within the last few weeks—that sentiment was all nonsense, and that riches were the only real satisfaction in this life. Fancy belonging to people like these—living in rooms like these! How could she ever have dreamed of running into such a danger!

She was seized with a wish to escape instantly, wondering how she could have been so foolish as to come; but, of course, that could not be. He held out his hand again, and she was obliged to put hers into it, though slowly and reluctantly.

"Sit down here, by me," said Willie. "It was good of you to come. Mother, you haven't spoken to Dora."

The christian-name startled Miss Hamilton, and jarred upon her terribly. Did he think she was engaged to him, then, in spite of everything? She gave her hand to Mrs. Hope in a cold haughty manner which impressed and frightened her very much. Bertha, in the background, saw it all, and felt cruelly disappointed,

suspecting now that her first impressions were right, yet at a loss to account for the change. Miss Hamilton had certainly been almost sweet to her. . . Poor Dora! No slight acquaintance was likely to understand a woman who could never understand or depend upon herself.

Mrs. Hope and Bertha went out of the room presently, leaving the young people together. About a quarter of an hour passed, and Bertha heard the house-door open and shut, but did not guess that the visitor had gone away. She sat on in her room for ten minutes more, hoping and praying for Willie's happiness, though with sore doubts troubling her all the time. Then she was called to the drawing-room by the quick impatient ringing of his little hand-bell. She ran downstairs, prepared to say good-bye to Miss Hamilton; but she found the fire nearly out, and her brother alone.

"She's gone!" exclaimed Bertha.

"She has been gone an hour. She only stayed five minutes. Where have you been? I'm frozen to death," said Hope impatiently.

"Wasn't she nice to you?" asked Bertha.

"Oh, my dear, you had better not think any more about her."

"Nonsense! Yes, of course she was nice to me. She asked about my illness; she meant to write when I was better. What more could one expect? Of course she is not used to sick people. Julius never had a day's illness in his life, and never will. I did not suppose for a moment that you would appreciate her; she is not your sort at all."

"I liked her very much, when I talked to her," said Bertha meekly. "But tell me, Willie, why did she go so soon? and is she coming again?"

"Of course she is coming again. Surely you didn't expect her to stay long at this time of night! If I could have walked home with her"—half getting up, and flinging himself down again—"people like her don't walk about in the dark by themselves. Bring me some more wraps, Bertha. I thought you were lost, or dead, or something. The fire was out, and I was dying with cold—of course, after being in a fever all the afternoon. Thanks, that's better," as Bertha covered him with a shawl. "Now go away, and stay away. I don't want either of you; I'm going to sleep."

An hour later, Bertha stole to the door, and opened it noiselessly. There she stood and listened in consternation to a smothered sound of violent piteous sobbing. Willie

was crying like a child in an agony of sorrow, crying as if his heart would break. Bertha's heart seemed to stand still as she listened to him. For a moment she doubted whether she should try to comfort him; but she reflected that all her consolations would be useless, that he would probably be angry at being found out, and stepping softly back she closed the door, leaving the poor sick fellow to grieve alone over his faithless love.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT painful evening was followed by a return of the fever, and for several days Hope was too ill to leave his room. His mother was furious with Miss Hamilton, and even with Bertha, who had brought her to the house, but Bertha was patient, and talked things over with her reasonably, till the poor woman was reconciled to her one stay, and even confessed that if Bertha's advice had been taken, they would never have come to Beachcliff at all.

Once or twice after this, Bertha saw Miss Hamilton in the distance, but, of course, did not think of approaching her. One day in the middle of the week, when Willie was a little better, she met her walking with Sir Samuel Grimes. Bertha bowed, and was going to pass without speaking, but Dora stopped and held out her hand.

"How do you do? How is your brother?" she said quite pleasantly.

Bertha's stiff face expressed no particular feeling. Sir Samuel, bestowing a slight stare on this humble person, probably thought the brother was some sick tradesman, in whom the beautiful and kind Miss Hamilton was pleased to be interested.

"Thank you," said Bertha. "He has been very ill ever since Saturday. He is a little better to-day," and she walked on.

"Those kind of people get awfully uppish, don't they?" chuckled Sir Samuel Grimes.

Dora gave some vague answer and looked away at the sea. In one of her usual fits of inconsistency, she just then hated herself, and Sir Samuel, and everybody at Beachcliff, except one poor, sick, sorrowing family in Seaview Place, the idea of belonging to which, last Saturday, had seemed too great and painful a degradation. She would have liked just then to turn and run after Bertha, to go home with her, to raise up Willie with a word and a touch from his sick-bed. It was in her power, she knew; but there are things in one's power that

one can't possibly do, and, after all, she might have repented an hour afterwards.

However, some sort of defiance, of present circumstances made her say to her companion:

"Do you remember Mr. Hope? That was his sister."

"Really! you don't say so! I remember him uncommonly well," said Sir Samuel with emphasis.

He glanced at Dora, reminding himself that she was eccentric, and wishing to avoid any risk of offending her. But she looked just as usual, and he was encouraged to go on with a satisfied smile:

"Poor Hope, to be sure! He wasn't a fellow I took to exactly. He didn't ring true, somehow—too much show, too much strut, as if the world belonged to him, which it didn't, you know."

"You were jealous of him," said Dora half playfully; "and so were a great many other people."

"Oh, come—well, perhaps we were, and not without reason."

"I didn't mean that," she said almost to herself, for she had been thinking more of Hope's general pleasantness and popularity.

"Julius sent him to Suez, didn't he?" Sir Samuel went on. "Has he turned up again? Not here, surely?"

"He came home from Suez very ill of fever. His mother and sister brought him here last week for change of air. You heard her say that he has been very ill again. He is so changed that nobody would know him."

"Lost his beauty, has he? You have seen him, then?"

"I have. Now, suppose we talk about something else."

Sir Samuel made no objection. For the moment his face had become rather gloomy; but Dora's power over him was almost unlimited, and she had no difficulty, as they walked on, in restoring him to his usual complacency.

On Saturday afternoon, Dora went once more to Seaview Place, and asked for Miss Hope. Bertha was out, but Mrs. Hope received the visitor in a downstairs room; she would not risk letting Willie know who was there.

She was at first inclined to be extremely fierce and to show a sort of angry surprise at Miss Hamilton's coming again—as if she had not done harm enough already! But she was disarmed by Dora's manner, which had none of the haughtiness of the

other day. The faithless girl was very pale, and sad, and calm. If she showed no strong feeling, there was at least no offensive coldness, no grand air, nothing to suggest a heartless flirting nature. Mrs. Hope listened, and looked, and almost suspected that Bertha was wrong, that Willie was breaking his heart for nothing, that Miss Hamilton's attachment to him was stronger than any of them believed. But this happy suspicion did not prevent her from shaking her head and firmly saying, "No—impossible!" when the strange young woman asked almost timidly if she might see her son.

"He is not strong enough to bear the excitement," said Mrs. Hope. "He has been ill, you know, ever since you came last Saturday. I will say that you called to ask for him, if you like; that will please him, I dare say."

Dora looked at her in an odd dreamy way, and made no answer for a minute.

"There was nothing last Saturday to agitate him," she said.

"Nor to comfort him. You found him in suspense, and you left him there," answered Mrs. Hope with some sharpness. "I cannot have that over again."

Dora looked down, changing colour a little. Then, while Mrs. Hope was watching her with painful anxiety, thinking that perhaps she would tell her something, she got up, drawing herself to her full height with a shiver.

"I'm sorry you won't let me see him," she said. "I had something to say, and I shall not be able to come again. I am going away next week."

"For a long time?"

"Yes, for a long time. I wished to tell him that—that I was going. I meant him to know before this."

"Does it matter to him so very much, do you think, Miss Hamilton?" said Mrs. Hope, with tears in her eyes, her self-restraint failing suddenly.

"I hope not," Dora answered with grave earnestness. "I hope he will be better soon. Good-bye!"

Her dignity was no doubt a possession very valuable to herself. It had saved her from many scenes, from many reproaches, by the impression it made on people of quicker emotions. Any ordinary girl would certainly not have left Mrs. Hope that afternoon with flying colours, as Dora Hamilton did, shaking hands with Willie's mother, and walking away, calm and graceful, from the ruins she had made.

On her way home along the Parade she met Mr. West. This young clergyman had only just come back to Beachcliff after a month's holiday. He came up smiling to speak to her, and began to hurry out some remarks which she cut short at once.

"Do you know that your friend Mr. Hope is here again?" she said to him.

"No. Where? Is he really?" stammered West, blushing and astonished, perhaps more at her manner than the news. "He had come home, very ill; that was the last news I heard. Is he better? Why does he come here, I wonder?"

"No, I think he is not much better," said Dora. "His mother and sister brought him here for change of air, but I believe he is worse. You had better go and see them—they live in Seaview Place. They don't know anybody here."

"Of course I'll go. Thank you for telling me."

They were both moving on, when some hesitation in her manner made him linger a moment. As if it were an after-thought, speaking over her shoulder in a careless sort of way, Dora said:

"By-the-bye, Mr. West, if you happen to think of it, you might tell them about me. I have not had an opportunity. I should rather like them to know."

"Oh, certainly," said West; but as he walked on, the shadow of his office began to fall on his bright holiday face. A clergyman has more disagreeable things to do than anyone else in the world. He suspected that this was a very painful task which she had given him, yet he never thought of shirking it, for he was a worthy fellow, and faithful to his friend.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. WEST had never forgotten that afternoon, a year ago, when Mrs. Hamilton and Julius had made him the unwilling instrument of dissecting poor Hope. He had been very much surprised, after that, by Hope's telling him, just before he started for Suez, that he was engaged to Miss Hamilton. Of course he congratulated his friend, but in his heart he was very sorry, for he did not like the Hamiltons, and had a deep distrust of Julius and his schemes. Hope knew that well enough, and knew that he was, in all probability, making a fool of himself, and risking the ruin of his family, for Dora Hamilton's sake; and thus there arose a certain coolness between the friends.

The Hamiltons went away from Beach-

cliff for the summer. When they came back in the autumn, Mr. West heard one day that the engagement was at an end; in fact, Julius and his mother denied that it had ever really existed.

Dora said nothing, but after a time she proved these reports true by making a fresh arrangement, the news of which poor West was now asked to break to his old friend.

The Hopes were delighted to see him when he walked in that Sunday afternoon, and Hope, who had now got back to his sofa in the drawing-room, was all the more pleased to see this companion of old days, in that every faith and friendship seemed to be slipping away from him. They all talked cheerfully, keeping on the surface of things. The longer young West looked at that worn, pitiful, eager face, the harder his task seemed to become. He could read in his friend's eyes what had brought him to Beachcliff, with what anxious pain of mind he was pursuing a shadow. He felt quite sure of what he had always suspected—that the Hamiltons had behaved abominably.

"Has anybody been to see you?" Mr. West asked casually.

"No," said Hope. "They don't know I'm here; at least, I have seen Miss Hamilton once, and she called yesterday, but my mother wouldn't let her in."

"He is almost too weak for visitors," said Mrs. Hope, while the young men looked at each other. Hope with something of his old defiance, West sadly and pityingly.

In fact, there was so much pity in the clergyman's honest face, that his friend flushed with a little anger.

"I like seeing people," he said. "She might as well have come in, as she took the trouble to come at all. I shall not see her again at present, for she is going away next week. I want to see Julius Hamilton; we must have a talk on business. Have you heard when he is coming back?"

"He's at home. He was at church this morning."

"Are you likely to see him? I wish you would take a message from me."

"If you like. Of course, you know, he is come home for this affair on Tuesday."

"What affair?" said Hope unsuspectingly.

"This wedding."

Nobody spoke for a moment. Something in Mr. West's look and tone told the women, at least, what was coming. Bertha

got up and came round to the head of the sofa, standing there, as if seized with a sudden wish to look out of the window: but neither she nor her mother made any attempt to check the telling of the news; they felt that the worst was come, and would soon be over; better for Willie than the wearing pain of long suspense. None of them quite knew whether his thoughts were following theirs; certainly he smiled faintly as he asked:

"Who is going to be married on Tuesday? Julius himself? Who is bold enough to marry him?"

"No, not Julius; but he is almost as much wanted, you see. Of course he has to give her away."

There was another silence. Willie Hope turned his head on the cushion and looked out, looked up and away at the sky that shone down clear and blue into his eyes. He was not, as it seemed, in the least excited by the news, or even astonished. His mother looked at him in trembling relief, and Bertha, her eyes dimmed by tears, followed the upturned gaze of his. Mr. West was deeply touched, and his silence was full of sympathy. No one spoke till Willie began in a quiet voice:

"Tell us more, old fellow. Who is the bridegroom, for instance?"

"Sir Samuel Grimes."

"Beauty and the Beast! Has he any recommendation besides his money?"

"I believe he is liberal—not a bad fellow on the whole."

"Ah! Has it been a long engagement?"

"I can't exactly say how long. I published their banns for the last time this morning."

"What a pity you were not at that church, Bertha. Well, West, go on. Is it to be a gay wedding?"

"Rather, I fancy. I am to have the honour of assisting; and I can't say I look forward—— Dear me, it's five o'clock," said West, starting up. "I must go, I'll come again as soon as possible. Good-bye, Mrs. Hope."

"Do, and bring us some more Beach-cliff gossip," said Willie, holding out his thin hot hand.

When their visitor had hurried away, Mrs. Hope and Bertha waited in painful suspense; they dared not flatter themselves that this calmness of Willie's could last long. But it was in just the same voice that he presently said:

"Look here, both of you—anything's

better than suspense. I feel quite jolly, I assure you. And what's more, I mean to go to the wedding."

"You! Oh, my dear, don't talk such nonsense," said Mrs. Hope. "Are you thinking of making a scene? Really, Willie, I am ashamed of you. I never heard anything so—so unmanly. Don't you think so, Bertha?"

"Willie does not mean to do anything of the kind," said Bertha quietly.

"I shall go to the wedding. She won't see me, or if she does, she won't care."

"I don't know, I rather think she will," said Mrs. Hope.

"No. It may amuse her to see the worm's last wriggle. We'll carry it off, Bertha, won't we? I feel ten times stronger already. You shall order a chair to take me to the church, we must find out what time; but first there is something else for you to do. Sit down and write to Covent Garden to order a first-rate bouquet."

"For her? Sir Samuel Grimes will give her a bouquet," said Bertha.

"I bet you it won't be such a good one as mine. They shall send it here, and it shall be left at the door with my card, the first thing on Tuesday morning. What's the flower that kills all other flowers? they may make it of that, if they like. Sit down, Bertha, and order something beautiful."

Mrs. Hope could bear no more, and went out of the room. Bertha, for her part, was not unwilling to do as her brother wished; she suspected that Dora had still a little feeling left, and thought that her cruel trifling deserved punishment. "You wouldn't like to send her a present?" she suggested in a low voice.

"No," said Willie, after a moment's hesitation; "I don't want her to be bored with any recollections of me more lasting than flowers that die."

"You have been much better to her than she deserved," said his sister.

"I have been a great fool," answered Willie. "But it doesn't matter now."

He lay very quiet for some time, while the room grew dark, and twilight crept over the grey sea. Presently he said in a low tired voice:

"Bertha, you needn't tell mother, because it would vex her, but I'm going to die. There's no chance of my getting better now."

"You are not going to die to-day," said

Bertha, and she came and stood beside him.

"No, nor to-morrow, nor the next day. But it won't be long, and I should like to be buried in the cemetery up there, where one can hear the sea. I have been a fool. Bertha, I always knew that 'Sink or Swim' was a risky affair, yet I asked for mother's money because it seemed my only chance of marrying Dora. It was not only the act of a fool, it was the act of a selfish brute. You were quite right in objecting."

"You understand it was not that I grudged you the money," murmured Bertha.

"I understand now, at any rate. And I've some bad news for you. Things have been going from bad to worse with that company. Now I am sure the last chance is gone—I know it—and I'll tell you why. If Julius Hamilton had seen any hope, he would never have let her marry old Grimes, because he is fond of her in his way. So it's all over, and I sha'n't even live to work for you and mother."

His voice failed, and Bertha, standing there in the dusk, felt as if darkness was indeed gathering over her world. She had no wish to cry or bemoan herself, however, feeling the strange influence of Willie's quietness; before, the inevitable there could be nothing but resignation. She did not try to comfort or caress him, but stood looking at his pale profile against the darkening sea.

After some time she said: "Don't let us make mother wretched before the time. And you need not be anxious, I shall work for her."

"You are a brave girl; she's lucky in having you," said Willie, and they then both fell back into silence.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISS HAMILTON was married on a wild gleamy day, the sun looking out now and then between grey hurrying clouds, which were driven by a cold north-west wind. The wind whistled past the church door, and made the bride shiver in her satin and lace.

She did not look her best, people said; much too pale, and not happy. Most of her acquaintances were in the church, and before the wedding-party arrived, their chief object of interest was a young

invalid, whose chair, accompanied by two quiet-looking women, had been wheeled in and placed near the great door, where he could see from a quiet corner everything that went on.

The ceremony was soon over; the Wedding March and the bells crashed out together, and in a few minutes Sir Samuel and Lady Grimes came down to their carriage. The sick man's chair had been wheeled out of the church; there, in the cold wind, he was waiting to see the bride go away. He was sitting upright, and as she came out of the door he took his hat off. Brides generally enjoy the privilege of not seeing the spectators who throng to look at them; but perhaps this bride was neither so nervous nor so happy as to ignore everyone else. Anyhow, she looked straight at Willie, as he looked at her. Both faces, so pale before, flushed rosy red at that moment. It was scarcely more than a second; the white vision had stepped into the carriage and was gone, and the invalid fell back with a sigh, almost of relief. The last pain was over.

They took him back as quickly as possible to the little room, where on the table beside his sofa stood a splendid white bouquet. It had arrived that morning; but after all, Willie would not send it to Dora. "Why should I plague her with it?" he said.

The flowers were hardly faded a few days later, when Bertha laid some of them about the quiet face and hands of her brother, who had fallen asleep. They laid him, as he wished, in the breezy cemetery on the hill, where winds and clouds and sunshine could pass freely over him, and the great voice of the sea was never silent.

Months afterwards, when Mrs. Hope and Bertha were gone away to a hard and sad life in London, knowing themselves utterly ruined by the failure of the "Sink or Swim," and having spent their last money in a stone at Willie's head with "his name and life's brief date," he in his unconscious solitude was visited by somebody who brought him flowers, and gave him tears too, foolish tears of useless late remorse.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXI. MR. SCARBOROUGH'S THOUGHTS OF HIMSELF.

WHEN Mr. Scarborough was left alone he did not go to sleep, as he had pretended, but lay there for an hour, thinking of his position and indulging to the full the feelings of anger which he now entertained towards his second son. He had never, in truth, loved Augustus. Augustus was very like his father in his capacity for organising deceit, for plotting, and so contriving that his own will should be in opposition to the wills of all those around him. But they were thoroughly unlike in the object to be attained. Mr. Scarborough was not a selfish man. Augustus was selfish and nothing else. Mr. Scarborough hated the law—because it was the law and endeavoured to put a restraint upon him and others. Augustus liked the law—unless when in particular points it interfered with his own actions. Mr. Scarborough thought that he could do better than the law. Augustus wished to do worse. Mr. Scarborough never blushed at what he himself attempted, unless he failed, which was not often the case. But he was constantly driven to blush for his son. Augustus blushed for nothing and for nobody. When Mr. Scarborough had declared to the attorney that just praise was due to Augustus for the nobility of the sacrifice he was making, Augustus had understood his father accurately and determined to be revenged, not because of the expression of his father's thoughts, but because he had so expressed himself before the attorney. Mr. Scarborough also thought that he was entitled to his revenge.

When he had been left alone for an

hour he rang the bell, which was close at his side, and called for Mr. Merton. "Where is Mr. Grey?"

"I think he has ordered the waggonette to take him to the station."

"And where is Augustus?"

"I do not know."

"And Mr. Jones? I suppose they have not gone to the station. Just feel my pulse, Merton. I am afraid I am very weak." Mr. Merton felt his pulse and shook his head. "There isn't a pulse, so to speak."

"Oh yes; but it is irregular. If you will exert yourself so violently——"

"That is all very well; but a man has to exert himself sometimes, let the penalty be what it may. When do you think that Sir William will have to come again?" Sir William, when he came, would come with his knife, and his advent was always to be feared.

"It depends very much on yourself, Mr. Scarborough. I don't think he can come very often, but you may make the distances long or short. You should attend to no business."

"That is absolute rubbish."

"Nevertheless it is my duty to say so. Whatever arrangements may be required, they should be made by others. Of course, if you do as you have done this morning I can suggest some little relief. I can give you tonics and increase the amount. But I cannot resist the evil which you yourself do yourself."

"I understand all about it."

"You will kill yourself if you go on."

"I don't mean to go on any further—not as I have done to-day; but as to giving up business, that is rubbish. I have got my property to manage, and I mean to manage it myself as long as I live. Unfortunately there have been accidents which

open hand. But he was a man who could hate with a bitter hatred, and he hated most those suspected by him of mean or dirty conduct. Mr. Grey, who constantly told him to his face that he was a rascal, he did not hate at all. Thinking Mr. Grey to be in some respects idiotic, he respected him, and almost loved him. He thoroughly believed Mr. Grey, thinking him to be an ass for telling so much truth unnecessarily. And he had loved his son Mountjoy in spite of all his iniquities, and had fostered him till it was impossible to foster him any longer. Then he had endeavoured to love Augustus, and did not in the least love him the less because his son told him frequently of the wicked things he had done. He did not object to be told of his wickedness even by his son. But Augustus suspected him of other things than those of which he accused him, and attempted to be sharp with him, and to get the better of him at his own game. And his son laughed at him and scorned him, and regarded him as one who was troublesome only for a time, and who need not be treated with much attention, because he was there only for a time. Therefore he hated Augustus. But Augustus was his heir, and he knew that he must die soon.

But for how long could he live? And what could he yet do before he died? A braver man than Mr. Scarborough never lived—that is, one who less feared to die. Whether that is true courage may be a question, but it was his, in conjunction with courage of another description. He did not fear to die, nor did he fear to live. But what he did fear was to fail before he died. Not to go out with the conviction that he was vanishing amidst the glory of success, was to him to be wretched at his last moment. And to be wretched at his last moment, or to anticipate that he should be so, was to him—even so near his last hours—the acme of misery. How much of life was left to him, so that he might recover something of success? Or was any moment left to him?

He could not sleep, so he rang his bell, and again sent for Mr. Merton. "I have taken what you told me."

"So best," said Mr. Merton. For he did not always feel assured that this strange patient would take what had been ordered.

"And I have tried to sleep."

"That will come after a while. You would not naturally sleep just after the tonic."

"And I have been thinking of what you said about business. There is one thing I must do, and then I can remain quiet for a fortnight, unless I should be called upon to disturb my rest by dying."

"We will hope not."

"That may go as it pleases," said the sick man. "I want you now to write a letter for me to Mr. Grey." Mr. Merton had undertaken to perform the duties of secretary as well as doctor, and had thought in this way to obtain some authority over his patient for the patient's own good. But he had found already that no authority had come to him. He now sat down at a table close to the bedside, and prepared to write in accordance with Mr. Scarborough's dictation. "I think that Grey—the lawyer, you know—is a good man."

"The world, as far as I hear it, says that he is honest."

"I don't care a straw what the world says. The world says that I am dishonest, but I am not." Merton could only shrug his shoulders. "I don't say that because I want you to change your opinion. I don't care what you think. But I tell you a fact. I doubt whether Grey is so absolutely honest as I am, but as things go he is a good man."

"Certainly."

"But the world, I suppose, says that my son Augustus is honest."

"Well, yes; I should suppose so."

"If you have looked into him and have seen the contrary, I respect your intelligence."

"I did not mean anything particular."

"I dare say not, and if so, I mean nothing particular as to your intelligence. He, at any rate, is a scoundrel. Mountjoy—you know Mountjoy?"

"Never saw him in my life."

"I don't think he is a scoundrel—not all round. He has gambled when he has not had money to pay. That is bad. And he has promised when he wanted money, and broken his word as soon as he had got it, which is bad also. And he has thought himself to be a fine fellow because he has been intimate with lords and dukes, which is very bad. He has never cared whether he paid his tailor. I do not mean that he has merely got into debt, which a young man such as he cannot help; but he has not cared whether his breeches were his or another man's. That too is bad. Though he has been passionately fond of women, it has only been for himself, not for the women, which is very bad.

There is an immense deal to be altered before he can go to heaven."

"I hope the change may come before it is too late," said Merton.

"These changes don't come very suddenly, you know. But there is some chance for Mountjoy. I don't think that there is any for Augustus!" Here he paused, but Merton did not feel disposed to make any remark. "You don't happen to know a young man of the name of Annesley—Harry Annesley?"

"I have heard his name from your son."

"From Augustus? Then you didn't hear any good of him, I'm sure. You have heard all the row about poor Mountjoy's disappearance?"

"I heard that he did disappear."

"After a quarrel with that Annesley."

"After some quarrel. I did not notice the name at the time."

"Harry Annesley was the name. Now Augustus says that Harry Annesley was the last person who saw Mountjoy before his disappearance—the last who knew him. He implies thereby that Annesley was the conscious or unconscious cause of his disappearance."

"Well, yes."

"Certainly it is so. And as it has been thought by the police, and by other fools, that Mountjoy was murdered—that his disappearance was occasioned by his death, either by murder or suicide, it follows that Annesley must have had something to do with it. That is the inference, is it not?"

"I should suppose so," said Merton.

"That is manifestly the inference which Augustus draws. To hear him speak to me about it you would suppose that he suspected Annesley of having killed Mountjoy."

"Not that, I hope."

"Something of the sort. He has intended it to be believed that Annesley, for his own purposes, has caused Mountjoy to be made away with. He has endeavoured to fill the police with that idea. A policeman generally is the biggest fool that London, or England, or the world produces, and has been selected on that account. Therefore the police have a beautifully mysterious, but altogether ignorant suspicion as to Annesley. That is the doing of Augustus, for some purpose of his own. Now let me tell you that Augustus saw Mountjoy after Annesley had seen him, that he knows this to be the case, and that it was Augustus who contrived Mountjoy's disappearance.

Now, what do you think of Augustus?" This was a question which Merton did not find it very easy to answer. But Mr. Scarborough waited for a reply. "Eh?" he exclaimed.

"I had rather not give an opinion on a point so raised."

"You may. Of course you understand that I intend you to assert that Augustus is the greatest blackguard you ever knew. If you have anything to say in his favour you can say it."

"Only that you may be mistaken. Living down here, you may not know the truth."

"Just that. But I do know the truth. Augustus is very clever; but there are others as clever as he is. He can pay, but then so can I. That he should want to get Mountjoy out of the way is intelligible. Mountjoy has become disreputable, and had better be out of the way. But why persistently endeavour to throw the blame upon young Annesley? That surprises me—only I do not care much about it. I hear now for the first time that he has ruined young Annesley, and that does appear to be very horrible. But why does he want to pay eighty thousand pounds to these creditors? That I should wish to do so—out of a property which must in a very short time become his—would be intelligible. I may be supposed to have some affection for Mountjoy, and, after all, am not called upon to pay the money out of my own pocket. Do you understand it?"

"Not in the least," said Merton, who did not indeed very much care about it.

"Nor do I—only this, that if he could pay these men and deprive them of all power of obtaining further payment, let who would have the property, they at any rate would be quiet. Augustus is now my eldest son. Perhaps he thinks that he might not remain so. If I were out of the way, and these creditors were paid, he thinks that poor Mountjoy wouldn't have a chance. He shall pay this eighty thousand pounds. Mountjoy hasn't a chance as it is; but Augustus shall pay the penalty."

Then he threw himself back on the bed, and Mr. Merton begged him to spare himself the trouble of the letter for the present. But in a few minutes he was again on his elbow and took some further medicine. "I'm a great ass," he said, "to help Augustus in playing his game. If I were to go off at once he would be the happiest

fellow left alive. But come, let us begin." Then he dictated the letter as follows:

"DEAR MR. GREY,—I have been thinking much of what passed between us the other day. Augustus seems to be in a great hurry as to paying the creditors, and I do not see why he should not be gratified as the money may now be forthcoming. I presume that the sales, which will be completed before Christmas, will nearly enable us to stop their mouths. I can understand that Mountjoy should be induced to join with me and Augustus, so that in disposing of so large a sum of money the authority of all may be given, both of myself and of the heir, and also of him who a short time since was supposed to be the heir. I think that you may possibly find Mountjoy's address by applying to Augustus, who is always clever in such matters.

"But you will have to be certain that you obtain all the bonds. If you can get Tyrrwhit to help you you will be able to be sure of doing so. The matter to him is one of vital importance, as his sum is so much the largest. Of course he will open his mouth very wide; but when he finds that he can get his principal and nothing more, I think that he will help you.

"I am afraid that I must ask you to put yourself in correspondence with Augustus. That he is an insolent scoundrel I will admit; but we cannot very well complete this affair without him. I fancy that he now feels it to be his interest to get it all done before I die, as the men will be clamorous with their bonds as soon as the breath is out of my body.—Yours sincerely,
"JOHN SCARBOROUGH."

"That will do," he said, when the letter was finished. But when Mr. Merton turned to leave the room Mr. Scarborough retained him. "Upon the whole I am not dissatisfied with my life," he said.

"I don't know that you have occasion," rejoined Mr. Merton. In this he absolutely lied, for, according to his thinking, there was very much in the affairs of Mr. Scarborough's life which ought to have induced regret. He knew the whole story of the birth of the elder son, of the subsequent marriage, of Mr. Scarborough's fraudulent deceit which had lasted so many years, and of his latter return to the truth so as to save the property, and to give back to the younger son all of which for so many years he, his father, had attempted to rob him. All London had talked of the

affair, and all London had declared that so wicked and dishonest an old gentleman had never lived. And now he had returned to the truth simply with the view of cheating the creditors and keeping the estate in the family. He was manifestly an old gentleman who ought to be above all others dissatisfied with his own life; but Mr. Merton, when the assertion was made to him, knew not what other answer to make.

"I really do not think I have, nor do I know one to whom heaven with all its bliss will be more readily accorded. What have I done for myself?"

"I don't quite know what you have done all your life."

"I was born a rich man, and then I married—not rich as I am now, but with ample means for marrying."

"After Mr. Mountjoy's birth," said Merton, who could not pretend to be ignorant of the circumstance.

"Well, yes. I have my own ideas about marriage and that kind of thing, which are, perhaps, at variance with yours." Whereupon Merton bowed. "I had the best wife in the world, who entirely coincided with me in all that I did. I lived entirely abroad, and made most liberal allowances to all the agricultural tenants. I rebuilt all the cottages. Go and look at them. I let any man shoot his own game till Mountjoy came up in the world and took the shooting into his own hands. When the people at the pottery began to build I assisted them in every way in the world. I offered to keep a school at my own expense, solely on the understanding that what they call dissenters should be allowed to come there. The parson spread abroad a rumour that I was an atheist, and consequently the school was kept for the dissenters only. The school-board has come and made that all right, though the parson goes on with his rumour. If he understood me as well as I understand him, he would know that he is more of an atheist than I am. I gave my boys the best education, spending on them more than double what is done by men with twice my means. My tastes were all simple, and were not specially vicious. I do not know that I have even made any one unhappy. Then the estate became richer, but Mountjoy grew more and more expensive. I began to find that with all my economies the estate could not keep pace with him, so as to allow me to put by anything for Augustus. Then I had to bethink myself what I had to do to save the estate from those rascals."

"You took peculiar steps."

"I am a man who does take peculiar steps. Another would have turned his face to the wall in my state of health, and have allowed two dirty Jews such as Tyrrwhit and Samuel Hart to have revelled in the wealth of Tretton. I am not going to allow them to revel. Tyrrwhit knows me, and Hart will have to know me. They could not keep their hands to themselves till the breath was out of my body. Now I am about to see that each shall have his own shortly, and the estate will still be kept in the family."

"For Mr. Augustus Scarborough?"

"Yes, alas yes! But that is not my doing. I do not know that I have cause to be dissatisfied with myself, but I cannot but own that I am unhappy. But I wished you to understand that though a man may break the law, he need not therefore be accounted bad, and though he may have views of his own as to religious matters, he need not be an atheist. I have made efforts on behalf of others, in which I have allowed no outward circumstances to control me. Now I think I do feel sleepy."

THE ENGLISH IN EGYPT.

It is not a little curious that a country through which a stream of Englishmen pours to and from India, in which a vast amount of English capital is—according as one is a bull or a bear—locked up or engulfed, should never have been for any length of time occupied by an English army. From the time when that bold and voracious knight, Sir John Maundeville, took service with the Soldan of Babylon, better known to-day as Cairo, to that when the little Condor achieved her brilliant exploit, the boom of English guns has only been heard twice in Egypt: at the Battle of the Nile, and the famous landing of Sir Ralph Abercromby, neither of which notable feats of arms left any mark upon the country. They were mere brilliant dashes, vigorous and deadly enough to do the work required of them, which was simply to disturb the French, and check the enterprise of Napoleon in the direction of India. Since then, whether the Porte or the Khedive has reigned, the condition of the country remained very much the same until the control was established; that is to say, the reign of the pachas prevailed, which signifies in plain language that the dominant caste oppressed the unfortunate

people at will. They ground their face with taxation, as had always been done to the Egyptians since the days of Pharaoh and the bondage of the Jews. Not only did they tax them unmercifully but they perpetually demanded the taxes in advance. This put the unfortunate husbandman in a cruel position, for not only was he worn to the bone by the exactions of the pacha, but his bones were cracked and the marrow extracted by the Greek usurers, who lent him money at high interest on his standing crops to appease the rapacity of his taskmasters. This is the system under which the revenue of the country became hopelessly inadequate to its requirements. There was always plenty wherewith to build palaces and buy female slaves for the rulers, but never a coin for the public service, while the mass of people was crushed into poverty. It is unnatural that the Egyptian peasant should be poor, for his land is so fertile, that despite forty centuries of tyrannous misrule, it has still within it the elements of wealth. All that man could do to cancel the good gifts of Nature has been done over and over again; but Egypt still survives, and has, perhaps, a future if English people will shut their ears to a silly cry about Egyptian nationalism, Egypt for the Egyptians, and the rest of it. It cannot be too often repeated that in such countries as Egypt there is no such thing as national or public feeling in the masses.

Fanaticism may be found here and there, but patriotism there is none. The peasant only hopes that he may be taxed less, and above all not be compelled to pay his taxes in advance. That is all he knows or cares about the matter, except that he hates military service under any ruler whatsoever. What is called nationalism in Egypt is a recently invented thing, easy to eviscerate and lay bare to the naked eye. It signifies in plain English that the pachas hate with a marvellous intensity of hatred all control. They resent with savage impatience any interference with their good old plan of extortion and extravagance, the working whereof they had reduced to a perfect triangular system. The pacha demanded his taxes in advance, thus driving the peasant into the hands of the Greek usurer, and had a perfect understanding with the latter as to his own share of the booty. Hence the actual producer had no chance between the upper and nether millstones of the pacha and the usurer, and was ground very fine. What is wanted by the

so-called nationalists is a return to this system in which the dominant Turk and crafty Greek spoil the Egyptian. It is not a new departure, but a demand on the part of the sometime governing class to return to their old evil ways, to rob, plunder, and squander without supervision or control the revenues of a country which should be surpassingly rich.

Very little was known of the real value of Egypt itself when Napoleon purposed to strike at India by way of the Red Sea. To him it was merely one of several lines of attack on India, in which it should be recollected that he would have had the public opinion of France entirely with him. In 1798 it was not yet forgotten that Dupleix had laid the foundations of a French empire in the East, which had only been gradually sapped by the successful career of the English East India Company. The melancholy death of Clive and the trial of Warren Hastings, who was still alive, were fresh in the minds of Englishmen, and the possibility of making India a French province was by no means so remote as it now appears. Whether Bonaparte really contemplated a canal at Suez, the reduction of the Mediterranean to a French lake, and the turning of the whole tide of Eastern commerce through France, so as to leave England outside of the continental scheme of traffic, or whether he looked at Egypt merely as a military road is difficult to decide. He certainly intended to strike a great blow at England, but it is quite probable that he had no clearly defined scheme in his mind. His expedition to Syria strongly favours the hypothesis that he was, as it were, feeling his way, and becoming at the same time aware that the task he had undertaken was greater than he had calculated upon. What is quite certain is that the expedition was a failure, except in so far as the scientific corps was concerned. Denon, and others of the learned, added greatly to our knowledge of ancient Egypt, but as an effort of war Bonaparte's Eastern raid was a terrible fiasco, costly in ships and men, but strangely enough productive of great honour and glory to its leader, who returned to France to seize the reins of government, as if he had been encircled with all the prestige of victory.

It appears at this distance of time, when vainglory has had time to evaporate, that the importance of the Battle of the Nile was nowise exaggerated by our grandfathers. It was in every sense a crowning victory, for it not only destroyed the

French fleet, but Bonaparte himself was cut off from France, and, had proper vigilance been exercised, would not easily have got back there. He slipped through, however, landed in France at that opportune moment for political adventurers, when the people are tired of everybody else. The Directory had blundered at home as much as he had abroad, and the Directory had not the prestige of previous victory. Never did a beaten general arrive more happily, and, it may be said, never did a commander abandon his army with less compunction. He had led his men into a hopeless position, and then and there abandoned them, his project of Eastern empire, and schemes for the regulation of the East by the sword of France. All vanished when he heard that the star of him—Bonaparte—would long since have paled but for his alert, clever, and intriguing wife. Josephine practically recalled him, little thinking, poor woman, that she was marring her own happiness by raising him she loved too high in the world.

Bonaparte left behind him in Egypt, to complete the conquest of the country by its organisation on a new basis, Jean Baptiste Kleber, one of his best generals, and a man of unimpeachable courage, conduct, and honour. Kleber had figured as a grenadier in the Army of the Rhine in 1792, and in seven years had fought his way to the front. He was already brigadier-general in the Vendean War, and as general of division covered himself with glory at Fleurus, and in the subsequent campaign under Jourdan. Then came the triumphant march to Frankfort, at which glorious moment the intrigues of his enemies caused his recall. Bonaparte, however, knew his man, and withdrew him from seclusion to accompany him on his expedition to Egypt and Syria. His reign in Egypt was cut short by the poniard of an assassin on the same day as that on which Desaix fell at Marengo. He was succeeded by General Menou, who was as completely of the old French army as Kleber of the new one, for he was a *maréchal de camp* in 1781. He took up, however, the cause of the Revolution, and while deputy for the nobles of Touraine to the States General, already showed that he perceived the signs of the times. In La Vendée he was unsuccessful as a general, being beaten thoroughly by Larochejacquelin. Accused by Robespierre, he was defended and saved by Barras, who on his

disobeying orders threw him over. Again a powerful defender appeared to help Menou, for Bonaparte took up the cudgels for him, and finally gave him a command in the Egyptian expedition. Wounded at Alexandria he nevertheless got into the town, and while his headquarters were at Rosetta, married the daughter of a rich proprietor of baths, and became a Mussulman under the name of Abdallah. After the assassination of Kleber on June 14th, 1800, Menou, being next in seniority, assumed the chief command. Although his personal courage was very great, and he had been wounded at Aboukir as well as at the first attack on Alexandria, he was unpopular with the army, and it was therefore under considerable disadvantages that he faced Sir Ralph Abercromby, a veteran of the first line, in whom his soldiers had perfect confidence.

Sir Ralph Abercromby was not only a distinguished soldier, but a man of great originality and powerful will. He was heartily glad when he escaped the bitter task of fighting the Americans in arms against the king's authority, and expressed himself on that subject in a manner not very grateful to "the king's friends," as they were called. In the unlucky campaign of the Netherlands he, among many who failed, succeeded in gathering laurels at the affair of Bergen-op-Zoom and in other engagements. In Egypt he met a man exactly his opposite in every quality but that of personal courage. Menou had a knack of always arriving everywhere after the appointed hour. Abercromby kept true military time. Menou was described by a contemporary as an "agreeable raconteur and a tremendous liar." Abercromby was the essence of truth and straightforwardness. Menou was always in debt, and at Turin killed a creditor who harassed him by a blow with a faggot. Abercromby carried the most delicate sense of honour into all his transactions. Menou, when he left one post for another, left a roomful of unanswered letters. Abercromby did his work with soldier-like promptitude.

On the 8th of March, 1801, Abercromby landed in Egypt with a force which was considered sufficient to expel the French. In the army of the Republic there were divided counsels, which might naturally have been expected from the character of the commander. There were troops at Cairo and troops at Alexandria, but when a descent was made by the English on the

latter place, the French were by no means well prepared for resistance. They bore themselves with extreme bravery, nevertheless, and the Battle of Alexandria was one of the fiercest encounters in the long war against Napoleon. Landing at Aboukir on the 8th, the English commander succeeded in bringing about an engagement on the 13th, which was followed by the general conflict known as the Battle of Alexandria or Canopus on the 21st, when the French were completely defeated. The loss of the battle cost the French Egypt, but England one of her best generals. Sir Ralph Abercromby was notorious for his recklessness in exposing himself to attack, and at the Battle of Alexandria was so far advanced as to become involved in a hand-to-hand combat with the French cavalry. He was unhorsed by a French trooper, who slashed him across the chest with his sabre, and would have killed him outright had he not been shot by a Highlander. The Frenchman's sword, which had been seized by Sir Ralph, was given by him to Sir Sydney Smith, and was sold with his effects many years afterwards. There is a spirited drawing of the Battle of Alexandria, at the moment of the attack on the British commander, in the library of the United Service Institution, done by an eye-witness of the combat.

Sir Ralph, who was sixty-three years old and had borne wear and tear in many climates, was much shaken and knocked about in his encounter with the French trooper, and was entreated to retire from the field, but this he absolutely refused to do, asking those in attendance to prop him up against a wall. He was in great pain from the heavy blow struck him by the Frenchman, but this wound proved insignificant as compared with one in the thigh which Sir Ralph attributed to a spent ball. When he was carried from the field at the close of the victorious day and the wound was examined, it was found impossible to extract the ball, and his strength gradually declined till the 28th, when he died on board Admiral Keith's ship. His victory crushed the French completely. Menou was driven into Alexandria with the loss of two thousand men and cooped up there, while General Belliard, at Cairo, was compelled to capitulate. Menou made as good a fight as he could, but on August 31st, 1801, was obliged to capitulate, and the remnant of Bonaparte's great Eastern expedition sailed for France in the early days of September.

Menou defended himself against the attacks of General Reynier to the satisfaction at least of the First Consul, was entrusted with the command in Piedmont, and finally died Governor of Venice.

Not being endowed with any foresight or any appreciation of the value of Egypt as a half-way house to India, the English Government abandoned Egypt two years later, only to return in 1807, under Fraser, take Alexandria, and again abandon their conquest.

When viewed by the light of subsequent events, it seems almost incredible that England, having conquered Egypt from such opponents as the French, should have tamely handed it over to the Porte, only to see it fall into the hands of the first of the Khedives, or hereditary viceroys. Since then, until the bombardment of Alexandria the other day, England has mainly been represented in Egypt by the pen. One financier after another has tried his hand at the Egyptian problem—Mr. Goschen, Sir Stephen Cave, and Sir Rivers Wilson have done their best; but in semi-barbarous countries something stronger than pen and ink seems to be required to keep within bounds the plundering and squandering instincts of the dominant class and to preserve for the husbandman, crushed by ages of tyranny, some portion of the fruit of his labour.

BINDWEED.

THE verdant garlands creep and twine
About the branches of the vine,
And hold in close embrace
The blushing beauty of the rose,
That year by year untended grows
In this deserted place.

Its blossom, like a shallow cup
Of purest parian, lifted up,
Is full of morning dew;
My comely lilies, nursed with care
To glad the garden borders, wear
No whiter, purer hue.

And yet, and yet, I know the vine
Whereon its graceful garlands twine,
Had come to better fruit,
If this lush growth of white and green,
The bindweed's close and clinging screen,
Had never taken root.

And yet, and yet, I know the rose
That through its greenness glints and glows,
Had come to fuller flower
If this fair fragile parasite
Had never spread its green and white
To summer sun and shower.

I pull the slender leaves apart,
There lies a lesson, oh, my heart!
Beneath the bindweed spray.
It saps the vine, and dwarfs the flower;
So clinging human love hath power,
To sap and dwarf away.

To sap the soul of strength divine,
To blight its fruit, like cumbered vine,
Which scarce a cluster shows;
To dwarf with narrow selfish claims,
The growth of wide and generous aims,
As bindweed dwarfs the rose.

And yet, God wot, the love is clean,
And like the bindweed, fresh and green
It springeth in the heart;
'Tis only when we lack the grace
To train it fairly in its place,
To portion out its part;

'Tis only when we let it climb
O'er holier heights and more sublime
Than earthly love should go;
'Tis only when we let it creep
Across the gifts that we should keep
For God, it brings us woe.

For let the bindweed have its will,
Nor human toil, nor human skill,
Can keep the garden fair;
But train the bindweed in its place,
And larger blossom, fairer grace,
Will straight repay the care.

So if the garden of the heart
Be over-run in every part,
By love beyond control;
Life's worthy labour cannot speed,
And flower of thought, and fruit of deed,
Grow never in the soul.

But train that weak and clinging love,
By sturdy props, to wave above
Life's work, and give it grace;
No longer then a parasite,
Love clothes with garlands of delight
Its own appointed place!

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

V.

"ARE these the links of Forth," she said;
Or are they the crooks of Dee?"

The links of Forth, decidedly—a linked sweetness long drawn out, the river winding fold upon fold, appearing now here and now there, at long distances apart, as if not one river only, but a complete congress of rivers, had been commissioned to meet under the walls of old Stirling. And indeed, afar off, the lines of tributary streams may be traced in clumps of foliage and the thinly-wreathed smoke of village and hamlet—the Teith, with valley and lake, stretching away to the rugged flanks of Ben Lomond, and Allan Water, winding from far distance among tumbled hills and green valleys, with the Ochill Hills bounding the view on that side; and then, out of the glow of cloud and sunshine in the west, ridge peers over ridge, and peak over peak, a glorious gateway to the mystic land beyond.

And then what a bead-roll of Bens—Ben Lomond, Ben Venue, Ben Aan, Ben Ledi, and Ben Voirlich, with dumpy Nam Var, the little lass among all these strapping lads. There they all stand, with their tops in the clouds, while soft gleams of light disclose

rifts, and precipices, and deep ravines. Then a whistle sounds from afar, and a tiny wreath of vapour curls swiftly along. It is the train from Oban, Loch Awe—no longer a far cry—and Callander, recalling the flight of time, and the necessity of getting through in time for the train in the reverse direction.

"And yonder hill," says the guide, pointing to a rugged heathery knoll just commanded by the ramparts, "is called the Heading Hill, for 'twas there the nobility had their heads cut off in the good old times, when Scotland had her own laws and her own princes. Here, in 1424, were executed the Duke of Albany and his two sons. He had been regent, ye'll mind." Another regent, you see—surely the least enviable post in all Scotland next to the kingship itself. Below the Heading Hill is a road still called Ballangeich, from which James the Fifth assumed his purser's name of "the Goodman of Ballangeich."

And now you shall see the other side of the castle, where the view, though less extensive, has a strong interest of its own. And first to a round hole in the rampart, where, as in a frame, the whole charming prospect is enclosed. "And this hole in the rampart," explains the guide with solid assurance of the truth of his assertion, "was made for poor Queen Mary, when she was a prisoner here. They wouldna let her show her head over the ramparts, but they scooped out a hole for her, and she was fain to peep through it at her own pleasant land." Beneath is the King's Garden—no garden now, but a sort of common, where sheep are feeding and the lads of the town are at play, but with terraces and flower-beds sharply marked out, and true-lovers'-knots in the fresher green of the turf. Beyond there is no very extensive prospect, the Campsie Hills closing in all round. The battle-field—the field of Bannockburn—lies below, two bare and open fields, with a pole sticking up that marks the site of the Bore Stone, where Bruce set up his standard. And from this point must the little band of English, so long beleaguered in Stirling Castle, have watched with joy and pride the advance of the gallant host of their countrymen who had marched so far for their deliverance, while ere the sun set all this grand array should be dissolved into a broken flying rout of men and horses. "A graun' day for Scotland, surely," says the old soldier.

There is another battle-field just below,

by Sauchie Burn, another tiny feeder of the Forth, hardly more than a mile from Bannockburn, the fame of which has been lost in the great victory of the Bruce—a battle practically between the men of the north, under the king, James the Third, who had the Highland clans for him, with the men of Fife and Angus, and the southern Scots, the men of Liddersdale, of Annandale, and of the East Lothians; and these, too, displayed the broad banner of Scotland, for they had the royal prince, the son of James, himself to be presently king, and end his days at Flodden—a parricidal combat, to end in the murder of the king as he lay hidden in a miller's house close by.

But leaving these old-world matters, the guide draws attention to a little colony of humble cottages, whitewashed, and with red-tiled roofs, and each a little plot of garden ground about it. It is an Irish settlement, of families who migrated to Stirling some seventy years ago, according to their own account, and finding rents in the town far above their means, squatted on this patch of land at the foot of the castle hill, built their huts, and brought their bits of ground into cultivation. No Scotch are allowed in this little community, that have still preserved among themselves the old Irish speech, which the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders can partly understand, but which is worse than Hebrew to the folk about Stirling.

And so with a hasty glance at mountain, loch, and firth, at battle-field and broken castle, at the blue roofs and grey walls of Stirling town, with the white smoke rising against the stormy sky, I make a quick descent from the castle steep. On the way is a fine old house, with round pinnaced towers and carved and graven windows, where a fatigue party of Highland soldiers are busy shovelling in a mighty load of coal. "It's just the hawspital," says a serjeant, who is looking on, but in other days it was known as Argyle's Lodging. And here it was that the Marquis of Argyle entertained our Charles the Second just after the young prince had taken the solemn league and covenant, and was putting on the best face he could, under the long prayers and longer sermons of the Presbyterians. It is an excellent notion on the part of the authorities to turn this interesting, unique old dwelling into an hospital, not perhaps for the invalids, who might do better in more modern and airier buildings, but as a

check upon the indiscreet curiosity of tourists, who would otherwise be peeping here and there, and always bothering for admittance. Whereas now the dread of infection keeps everybody away.

At the foot of the hill, to come once more to everyday life, runs a tramway towards the Bridge of Allan. And the course of this I follow, having half an hour to spare before the train starts, till it brings me to the river and the new bridge. The auld bridge is just above, with its fine antique outline, its high-pitched crown, and bold and open arches, while their flanks and abutments look so light and slender that you would say the first winter's torrent must carry the bridge away bodily. And yet it has stood for centuries, and may even yet see out its modern rivals. It is this old bridge that was significantly called the gate of the Highlands, for all beyond the river was so much debateable land, where the word of a chieftain with his stout clansmen behind him was worth more than the king's writ. And at one time this bridge was strongly defended with stout gates and barricades across the

Narrow footpath of a street,
Where two wheel-barrows tremble when they
meet.

The river comes swirling through with many an oily circle on its dark waters, and just below some fishermen in a boat have just shot their salmon-nets. It would be exciting now to see a silvery monster entangled in the trammels; but such luck never comes to the casual spectator. Did one ever stop to watch an angler and see him land a fish; or a cormorant, or a heron, and see him swallow his prey? "An hour ago," says an old fellow, who is watching the fishermen too, "an hour ago they landed a big fish, the first of the season." And then the tramcar comes up, and presently lands me at the railway-station.

There is something like a bustle of coming and going at Stirling station; and once seated in the train you feel that you are fairly in the tourist stream. Hitherto we may have been making little circles of our own, but now from our individual eddies we have fairly shot out into the main current. Local talk of shops and prices current, of kirk sessions and meenisters' discourses, is replaced by tourist talk, of connections by train and coach, of hotels and hydropathies, and most of us have cunning little books full of coupons that marshal us the way that we should go. Here are two fresh-looking girls,

English of the English, you would say, till some talk of the Wagga Wagga river discloses that they hail from the Antipodes. But hardly am I settled in the only vacant seat when I discover on the opposite side the two young ladies from Kent. The recognition is mutual, we are delighted to meet again in a strange land; but where are their friends? I don't venture to ask; there may be a heart-breaking story of desertion. They are going to stop at Callander to-night. Yes, and through the Trossachs in the morning, and along Loch Katrine. Our routes are identical, of course. "How nice! and I shall have the pleasure of looking after your welfare." The younger sister blushes, and the elder looks archly confused, as she replies: "Oh, thank you very much, but I believe, indeed I am almost certain, that our friends are in the train."

And sure enough, as we stop at the Bridge of Allan, there is a rush to our carriage, and two friendly faces make their appearance. "Are you quite comfortable? Can we get anything for you?" And then as the train is on the point of starting, I am recognised by the two friends. "Bless you," fervently, to the sisters. "Take care of them," approvingly to me, and the young men rush back to their carriages. But there was a satisfactory warmth of tone about these youths that would have delighted Mrs. Gillies. If they are in separate carriages, it is more perhaps on the score of economy, for the lads are travelling third-class, than of mistrust of the designs of the fair sex.

Then comes Dunblane, with its cathedral about the size of a substantial parish church. Sherra'muir is close by, where "the great Argyle led on his files" against the Earl of Mar in arms for the Pretender, when first the red-coats ran away.

And at Dunblane, in my ain sight,
They took the brig wi' a' their might,
And straught to Stirling winged their flight.

While as for the Highlanders, "they fled like frightened doos, man."

At Doune there is a fine castle, which was built, they say, by that particular regent, or ex-regent, who had his head chopped off on the Heading Hill at Stirling, and there is a fine old bridge, too, built by the same courteous tailor who founded the Guildhall in that town. And now, with the mountains growing upon us and encompassing us on all sides, we thread our way among them till the train stops at Callander.

Now, for something in the way of a small

turmoil, commend me to one of these Highland stations when the train comes in. What with the people who are alighting, and the friends who have come to meet them, and the friends' friends to witness the meeting, and to be introduced and shake hands all round in the very middle of the platform; and what with the porters with their boxes—and each female traveller has at least three big boxes, while the women are as three to one to the men—and what with the hotel touts and the brown gillies who are speering after “twa dogs fra Dunoon,” and brawny men in Highland bonnets with their salmon-rods; and photographers with their three-legged cameras; and artists with whole bundles of miscellaneous belongings; with all these and much more in the way of components of hurry and bustle, it is not a storm, but a perfect tornado in a teapot this Highland station when the evening train comes in. But in all this bustle there is nobody bustling for me. I see with a pang the two young women from Kent packed into an omnibus and sent off to an hotel. I see their two prudent friends march off with their bags in search of a lodging. But for one not destined such delights to share, for me there is no blink of the eye from Jennie, nor is the stalwart form of Uncle Jock to be seen among the press.

But as I am looking about me, my faith in human friendship growing feebler and feebler every moment, I am accosted by a tall freckled young fellow with a girl by his side.

“I think you'll be the friend of Jock Gillies we're seeking. I'm just his nephew, Archie Grant.”

And the girl with him is Mary, of course, his sister, about whom one's first impression is—well, she's rather sandy, as if, what with sun and wind and shower, she had had the colour taken out of her. But then there is such a pleasant glint in her soft brown eyes, and her figure is so lissom and her step so free, that you cannot help thinking her charming.

“I am sure Jennie would have come with us,” says Mary in explanation, “but I think she's making herself grand for dinner. And Archie and I have dined, and we've got nothing to do but to wander about.”

And I almost wished I could wander with them. But castle and palace hunting is hungry work, and just then the gong sounded, and I felt myself irresistibly drawn towards the dining-room.

They grow enormous geraniums in these parts, which are ranged upon the table, dividing it into sections impervious to the eye; but I espy Jennie and her mother, who are already seated. They are indeed somewhat grandly got up, but Jennie graciously indicates a seat that has been turned down at her side.

“Are you not very much obliged to me for sending Mary to meet you?” asks Jennie.

“It was a charmingly unselfish act, as you did not want to come yourself.”

Jennie shrugged her shoulders slightly.

“Mamma insisted on my doing my hair for dinner; and do you know why?”

No, I had not the least notion; but the result was remarkably good, all the same.

“Well,” continued Jennie, not noticing my admiring glance, “you see that quiet young fellow with his nose in his plate opposite, and the thin freckled girl who is entirely engrossed in her soup? Well, he is the seventh cousin to a Scotch duke, and she is a girl he has just married, with a lot of money.”

“And your mother bids you bind your hair in their honour, and you just go and do it? Well, you haven't half the resolution of the other young woman.”

“Oh, as for that,” said Jennie, tossing her head saucily, “Lubin is here.”

“You mean Lubin the second?”

“I don't know whom you mean,” said Jennie severely. “I mean Ronald. He has been sketching all day; but the place does not suit him, he says. You will find him down the river, not far from the bridge, where he has set up his easel, and he's getting some evening effects; and,” in a lower tone, “I think he wants to speak to you about something.”

“Oh, I'll be there, with a joyful heart,” I replied defiantly, “if only you'll promise, Jennie, to marry the survivor.”

“You've been drinking whisky,” said Jennie in a low reproachful tone. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself.”

As soon as dessert appeared the seventh cousin of the duke and his bride darted away to privacy, and Mrs. Gillies thought herself bound to follow such an illustrious example, and whisked Jenny away with her.

“Come with me, Jennie,” I whispered “and prevent bloodshed.” Jennie nodded sagaciously, and presently joined me as I stood on the hotel steps smoking an after dinner pipe. The evening was chilly, and Jennie drew her cloak about her, and

hivered a little. There seemed to be rain in the air and the clouds were low and watery, hanging about the flanks of the hill and seeming to close about us on all sides.

Ronald is soon discovered; he has packed up his materials and is gloomily smoking a pipe by the river bank. He can do nothing here, he says, in answer to Jennie's questioning; everything is tame and colourless. But he is away first thing in the morning, and he means to make his way to Skye. A gloomy corrie and stern mountain tarn will suit his humour, and he thinks he will be able to make a picture of it. And a man he knows has a little yacht at Oban, and has offered to drop him on the coast wherever he pleases. "Then you will be quite out of our latitudes," says Jennie sadly. "Haven't you been urging me all the time to get to work?" replies Ronald with some bitterness.

Just then I spy in the distance the two friends, the masculine friends, who are returning towards the village, looking rather fagged and disconsolate, and I am glad to join them for a while that Jennie may have a chance of talking to her young man. "Here is a curious affair," cries the rest of the friends; "we have been all over the place looking for a room to sleep in, and there isn't one anywhere." I was not certain, but I thought there was room in our hotel. "Yes," replied the other, "but you see that would be awkward, for our friends are there, and it might compromise us." They are strange fellows, these two friends, the elder bluff and sociable, constantly deserting his female friends for newer faces, and yet returning like the needle deflected from the pole. He wears a cap of semi-naval appearance, with gilt buttons, and has something of a sea-going aspect, and yet not a sailor. Perhaps he is a ship's-husband, and thinks any other connection would savour of gamy; anyhow, I shall set him down for that till I know something more about him. His friend is more reserved and refined, and good deal more retiring, and always kind and attentive to his female friends, who for that seem to value the brusque ship's-husband far more than him. But he too is an enigma. I can't think of any line of life that would exactly suit him in his comfortable serge suit and foreign-looking black cap. He, too, is rather nautical in his ways, and in utter despair I must christen him the purser, although I admit there is nothing purser-like in his ways, unless it is in his attention to the ladies.

"Hotels are dear," continued the ship's-husband; "not that I would mind that once in a way—besides, I would make a bargain with them beforehand; but I consider it compromising."

"I don't see that," urged the other in his rather piping voice. "I put it to this gentleman. If there are no other beds in the place, are we compromising ourselves?"

"No, not anywhere else, I admit," cried the ship's-husband cannily; "but in Scotland, don't you see. Now, suppose they put down all our things on one bill, wouldn't that be a document? Suppose it ever came into court now, I ask, wouldn't that be a document?"

"For my own part," I interposed magisterially, "I don't see what you have to be afraid of. I am sure that either of the ladies in question is calculated to adorn a man's fireside and make his home happy."

"So they are, so they are," cried the younger one fervently, and squeezing my hand warmly. "The gentleman's quite right, Joe. So they are."

"A very happy and truthful sentiment," quoth the other, "but he hasn't got quite the grip of the matter yet. These ladies have got their nice little home and their nice little incomes. You and I, Tom, have got our nice little homes, and our incomes that would be nicer if they weren't so little, but still that can put by our ten-poun' note for our little summer tour. All very well, so far, but then if the ladies marry away go their little incomes."

"Yes, that's where 'tis," said the other gloomily. "You're right, Joe; 'tisn't to be thought of."

And so I must warn Mrs. Gillies that if she has any design to entangle these two comfortable couples, she must put it aside. It seems hard too that these poor girls must wear out their lives in celibate solitude. But then things in general are hard. They are hard upon poor Jennie just now as she shakes hands with Ronald, with one little sob in her throat as she turns away.

"Why should we make ourselves miserable, Jennie, when life is slipping away so quickly and all our chances of happiness? Marry me, Jennie, and put that poor young fellow out of his misery, and then when he is a rising man you will be a dounce young widow, and everything will come right."

But Jennie only laughed and walked quickly on.

But what are the troubles of over-night

when the sun shines in bright and glorious—too bright to last, I am afraid, and certainly putting to flight all thoughts of any more folding of the hands in sleep? But they are wonderfully early birds in these Highlands. People are stumping about the street, and there is a quiet kind of movement in the house. It strikes me that a stroll by the river bank will be a good preparation for an early breakfast; and so I open my door, and am unwittingly the witness of quite an affecting little scene. The two semi-nautical friends had clearly found a room here for the night, for here was the younger one fondly contemplating two pairs of shoes on the mat. "Here, Joe," he cries at last, "come and look here." And Joe, also in his shirt-sleeves, comes and looks over the other's shoulder.

Now the Boots had evidently made a very natural mistake. There on the mat reposed a masculine pair of boots, and with them a dainty little pair of feminine shoes. "Yes, they're hers," whispered Tom, the purser. "Don't it give one quite a thrill to think what might have been!" "Why, then, mine are opposite their door," cried the more practical ship's-husband. "Go in your stocking feet and get them back, Tom." And Tom executed his mission quite reverentially. I am not sure even whether he did not kiss the little bottines before he laid them down beside the sister pair. "It's lucky there's no witnesses," whispered Joe, and then my door creaked, and the pair retreated hastily.

At breakfast we are alternately elated and depressed as the sunshine streams through the windows, or a sharp shower rattles over the wooden roof. But Mary Grant is in high spirits all through. Anything is better, she declares, than the smoky chimneys and splashy streets of Glasgow, where she has been keeping house for her brother for the past three months. We have no time to linger, for breakfast is fixed at half-past eight, and we ought to be at the station by nine to get good places on the coach for the Trossachs. We must all start fair from the station, whether we have come by train or not, so we have been told by the jovial coach-proprietor, who seems almost too big to get into his little box of an office. And there the coach is drawn up in front of the little station, with its background of larch-covered hill. It is not a coach such as we know by that title, but rather a van with cross-seats, like the band-van

of a circus company; but the cattle are good, and look like going. The front seats are most in demand, of course, and by the time the train is due, for which we are waiting, all these are filled up, leaving only the back seats for the new comers. And presently the train rolls in with its through carriage from St. Pancras, and people turn out sleepily who have left London over-night, but seem to inhale renewed vigour with the sweet mountain air. And then, without unnecessary delay, our scarlet-coated coachman pulls his horses together, and starts us on the road to the Trossachs.

THE FATE OF ROMILLY.

THERE are certain characters in the round of political life which, without any particular brilliancy or showy gifts, seem to have been regarded by their contemporaries with special respect and affection. To this class certainly belonged Romilly. His political life was distinguished by little save a sober, intelligent, professional progress, and by his interesting love of home and his wife, to which he subordinated all his hopes of advancement. Even more admirable was the sacrifice of his prospects of promotion by his speaking against his party on a critical occasion, when his principles required him so to do. On one of these he wrote down that "he had now lost all chance of being made Chancellor." Such instances are as refreshing as they are rare. Such a man's service is generally eagerly sought, either by constituencies, as his respectability throws credit on their sagacity of choice, or else by exalted personages, such as the Prince of Wales, who was very eager to attach him to his rather tottering cause.

"In May, 1817, Romilly received a singular present. Dr. Parr had, it seems, the mania of collecting silver plate, of which he had in his will bequeathed a dinner-service to Romilly. He now, however, chose rather to give than bequeath it, and he accordingly presented it to his friend with a complimentary hint that it would not be 'unfit for the table of a Lord Chancellor when he should entertain the judges or the Cabinet.'" Romilly accepted it, though with some reluctance and demur on account of the splendour and value of the gift; but in a codicil to his will, made shortly before his death, he bequeathed it back to Parr, who again re-transferred it to

the eldest son of his friend in a generous and affectionate letter.

But it was his attachment to his wife, constant and ever-increasing as they grew old together, that is the greatest evidence of the charm of disposition of this amiable man, and it is melancholy to think that this devotion should have actually been the cause of his disastrous end. He was always welcomed at Bowood, Lord Lansdowne's place, which he visited nearly every year, and in 1796 he had, by an accident, all but interrupted the agreeable series. Of this special occasion, he writes some twenty years later :

"To what accidental causes are the most important occurrences of our lives sometimes to be traced ! Some miles from Bowood is the form of a white horse, grotesquely cut out upon the downs, and forming a landmark to a wide extent of country. To that object it is that I owe all the real happiness of my life. In the year 1796 I made a visit to Bowood. My dear Anne, who had been staying there some weeks, with her father and her sisters, was about to leave it. The day fixed for their departure was the eve of that on which I arrived, and if nothing had occurred to disappoint their purpose, I never should have seen her. But it happened that on the preceding day she was one of an equestrian party which was made to visit this curious object. She over-heated herself by her ride ; a violent cold and pain in her face was the consequence. Her father found it indispensably necessary to defer his journey for several days, and in the meantime I arrived. I saw in her the most beautiful and accomplished creature that ever blessed the sight and understanding of man. A most intelligent mind, an uncommonly correct judgment, a lively imagination, a cheerful disposition, a noble and generous way of thinking, an elevation and heroism of character, and a warmth and tenderness of affection such as is rarely found even in her sex, were among her extraordinary endowments. I was captivated alike by the beauties of her person and the charms of her mind. A mutual attachment was formed between us, which at the end of a little more than a year was consecrated by marriage. All the happiness I have known in her beloved society, all the many and exquisite enjoyments which my dear children have afforded me, even my extraordinary success in my profession, the labours of which, if my life had not been

so cheered and exhilarated, I never could have undergone—all are to be traced to this trivial cause."

"Of the worth of Lady Romilly's mind," says Mr. Croker, "her nearer friends only could be adequate judges ; but those who remember her in society will admit that her husband, who never ceased to be a passionate lover, has but little exaggerated her personal charms. She was lively, elegant, and pretty."

With this lady Romilly spent some twenty-two happy years, and it was destined that they were not to be separated in death longer than a few days when the disastrous issue which filled England with grief closed his life.

"Lady Romilly died," says his editor, "on the 29th of October, 1818. Her husband survived but for three days the wife whom he had loved with a devotion to which her virtues, and her happy influence on the usefulness of his life, gave her so just a claim. His anxiety during her illness preyed upon his mind and affected his health ; and the shock occasioned by her death led to that event which brought his life to a close, on the 2nd of November, 1818, in the sixty-second year of his age."

This would be read as nothing very exceptional by the average reader, but the catastrophe is best described in the narrative of his old friend Dumont, a most natural and affecting one, and told at his inquest :

"Mr. Stephen Dumont, of Geneva, then stated that he was one of the Representatives of the Council at Geneva, but had been in England previous to the restoration. 'I have,' he said, 'been connected with Sir Samuel Romilly a great many years ; my intention was to have spent the summer with my best friend, Sir Samuel, and his lady ; but the state of Lady Romilly's health was such that she was removed to Cowes, in the Isle of Wight.' Here the witness, in great anguish, said it would be better that he should read the letters he had then received from Sir Samuel. A letter was then read from Sir Samuel, dated from Cowes, 27th September, inviting Dr. Dumont to visit him there ; saying that he could not promise him any pleasure, as he considered Lady Romilly in a very perilous state, as the physicians did not say she was out of danger ; and concluded thus : 'She is considered by her medical attendants in some danger. She is for the present a little better, and I take care neither to let her nor the poor children see the anxiety I feel, but it costs me a

great deal; with all this, do not suppose I have not resolution to undergo everything to preserve my health for my children's sake."

He then went on: "I arrived in the Isle of Wight on the 3rd of October, and Lady Romilly was well enough to spend a few hours in company; but Sir Samuel seemed to have no confidence, and notwithstanding that recovery he was in the same state of anxiety. Lady Romilly had a relapse, and was for some days in a great state of suffering. During that time nothing could equal the excruciating pains of Sir Samuel but his fortitude and resignation. He was almost entirely deprived of sleep, and I saw he began to entertain the greatest apprehension from that circumstance. Twice or three times he has expressed to me his fears of mental derangement. Once he sent for me in the middle of the night, at least at two o'clock in the morning, and spoke to me of a dream he had had full of horrors, and said that an impression had remained upon his mind as if the dream had been a reality. He asked me if I did not consider that as a proof that his mind was broken, and his faculties impaired. Conversations about his children generally restored a certain degree of peace to his mind, and sometimes he proposed plans for their education and future establishment. On Thursday, the 29th of October, about ten o'clock, while at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, he was informed by his nephew, Dr. Roget, for whom he always showed the same attachment as for one of his sons, that his lady was no more. I have omitted to say that the two sisters of Lady Romilly came on the Tuesday previous, and he said he could shed no tears when he saw them. He told me his brains were burning hot. He left Cowes with great reluctance the next day (Friday), but he declared he would be governed entirely by Dr. Roget and his friends. I accompanied him, and on Friday we slept at Winchester. He felt extremely exhausted. Dr. Roget slept in the same room, and Sir Samuel's night was extremely restless. The next morning I observed marks of great agitation, which he tried to subdue; he was constantly tearing his gloves, or the palm of his hand, scratching his fingers and his nose, and some blood came from his nose. When we arrived at an inn on the road he was so weak that we could proceed no further. We slept there, and Dr. Roget still slept in the same room with him. I had proposed to him not to come

to Russell Square, but to take some other house for the present. He answered, that he was likely to be laid up for some time, and he was desirous of getting home, and he proceeded; but I observed more violent signs of agitation still, more tearing of his hands and of his nose. In a moment that he was shutting his eyes and wringing his hands, I took the hand of his daughter and placed it in his hand; upon which, opening his eyes, and having perceived what I had done, he cast upon me an unutterable look of gratitude, and embraced his daughter. When we arrived in Russell Square he made great efforts to compose himself, and went to his library, and threw himself upon a sofa, quite in a manner that was alarming to me; then for some moments he was joining his hands, as in a state of delirium, but he spoke nothing. A moment after he got up, took my arm, went round the two rooms, and appeared to me to be in the state of a man dying of an internal wound. About seven in the morning of Monday Dr. Roget came to me in a state of extreme anxiety, telling me that his uncle was much worse, with a violent fever, uttering some expressions in a state of perturbation, and complaining that he was distracted. Dr. Roget immediately called Dr. Marcet, who came instantly, and they sent for Dr. Babington to join in a consultation. I asked Dr. Marcet and Dr. Roget if I could go and see my friend, and they desired me not to do it, saying the greatest quiet was necessary for him, and that he was only to have one person to attend him in the room. I went then to Holland House, at Kensington, to see his three youngest children, whom Lord Holland had taken from school to his house, and to make some arrangements with respect to them. When I returned to Russell Square, about half-past three, I found one of the servants in tears and Dr. Roget in a state approaching to despair. My first feeling was stupor and astonishment, for I had never, during the whole month that I had passed with Sir Samuel, and dining most constantly with him and his son—and during the time the ladies were employed in business (during which time we had intimate conversations—I never had any apprehension of the accident by which he had lost his life. The intimate knowledge that I had of his high principle of duty, of his moral and religious fortitude, of his love for his country, and of his—(much affected)—of his parental affection, totally excluded from my mind

every suspicion or idea of the catastrophe that has happened."

His mind, overwrought by grief, had given way under the strain, and this most amiable and affectionate of men had destroyed himself.

UNMASKED.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

"MOTHER!"

Mrs. Jackson looked round, startled at the tone in which this word was uttered.

Rosalind had gone down to Cookham to shop, intending to lunch at the Hansards', but here she was back again, standing at the door with a white face and terror-struck eyes, out of breath and almost speechless. Mrs. Jackson rose swiftly and closed the door.

"What is it?" she asked, turning pale herself.

"Paul Stone!" gasped Rosalind; "in Cookham and going to the Hansards'!"

A cry of dismay escaped the widow.

"Did he see you?"

"No; but he will—he must! I am ruined!"

"Quiet, Rosalind; don't speak so loud. There is no harm done yet; you must simply have a bad headache, and be unable to go to the Hansards to-day."

Rosalind shook her head.

"No, no," she said; "he will see my photograph and recognise me; then my avoiding him would tell fatally against me."

"But you can't meet him!"

Rosalind had thrown off her hat and gloves, and was nervously clasping and unclasping her hands.

"I told you at the time it was foolish to have that photograph taken," continued Mrs. Jackson; "it was clearly creating another means of identifying us."

"How could I possibly refuse when Robert insisted on it? Oh, if we had never come here!"

"Don't be foolish, Rosalind; we were as safe here as anywhere, and if the worst comes to the worst we can take our departure and start afresh somewhere else."

"You forget Robert."

"Oh, Robert! He wouldn't trouble us. But you are not yourself, Rosalind. I never saw you so upset. Do you mean to tell me that you can't outwit Paul Stone?"

The girl grew calmer.

"There is one thing I could do," she said slowly.

"What is that?"

"Go to the Lodge as if nothing had happened, face him boldly and deny ever having seen him before. What proof could he bring forward that I am Norah Field?"

"Do you think you could make him believe that there are two such faces in the world?"

"It doesn't matter what he believes, if I can convince the Hansards. Besides, I have changed a good deal; remember I had been ill, and was still pale and thin when he saw me. What is the time? Twelve? In half an hour I must start."

The girl sat down and leant her head upon her hands, planning what she should wear, say, and do. Mrs. Jackson, who had taught her daughter to act, and knew that her pupil's powers far eclipsed her own, did not disturb her.

In a quarter of an hour Rosalind went upstairs and changed her dress. Mrs. Jackson accompanied her and stood by, making various suggestions.

"What do you say to a little paint?" she asked.

"No; nothing to alter me to the Hansards," replied Rosalind. "I can bring the colour to my face if I want it. There, that must do. Courage now, and Paul Stone shall for the second time in his life fail in cross-examining me."

"Rosalind, be careful. I am horribly nervous."

"I am not, luckily. My spirit's up, and I feel equal to the occasion. I am more than Paul Stone's match."

The girl absolutely laughed.

"By the way," she enquired suddenly, "have any contributions come in for the destitute mother and blind daughter?"

"Not many, about five pounds in all."

"How miserable! I must go upon a different tack in the next appeal to the public, or better still, I'll journey up to town and collect money by a house-to-house visitation. That's the most remunerative employment I know."

"Rosalind, for goodness sake be quiet! You are much too excited to meet that man. Take my advice and stay at home."

But Rosalind ran downstairs with a laugh, and set out towards Cookham. All her future depended upon her succeeding now, and succeed she would.

At the wicket-gate leading through the garden of Cookham Lodge up to the house, stood Robert eagerly awaiting her.

"Rosalind dearest, how late you are! I would have come to fetch you, only they

said you were shopping and I should probably miss you."

"You might have come into the town for me," said Rosalind reproachfully.

"It was just in the town that I was afraid of missing you."

"Missing me, Robert! Am I so like everybody else?"

Upon which ensued a lover's passage at arms, and then Robert, as they walked slowly up the path together, told her that an old friend of his had arrived unexpectedly and would stay over Sunday.

"I don't know whether I ever mentioned Paul Stone to you," he said; "he was a chum of mine at college, and has gone in since for distinguishing himself at the bar. Awfully clever, you know, and hardworking and devoted to his profession. And last, but not least, he regards women as the bane of men's existence."

"Oh, Robert, whatever must he think of you?" laughed Rosalind. "Doesn't he pity you sincerely for having fallen a victim so early?" Who could have believed, to see her smiling face, that she, better than anyone in the world, could have given a reason for Paul Stone's contempt of women.

"There he is!" exclaimed Robert. "Come and be introduced."

"Robert, how can you?" whispered Rosalind, pretending to hang back. "He won't want to speak to me. I'm a woman, remember."

"He never saw a woman like you before. Come along, dearest."

As Robert, proud of his future wife's appearance, drew her forwards and formally introduced her to the tall man who was stepping towards them from the house, Rosalind raised her eyes, and with the prettiest smile in the world bowed her gracious head.

Stone started as if he had been shot.

"Norah Field!"

Rosalind slightly raised her eyebrows.

"Norah Field!" she repeated with an amused smile. "No, my name is quite different."

Stone's eyes were ablaze as he directed straight at her face a gaze before which the boldest impostor might have quailed. Rosalind sustained it unflinchingly for a moment or two; then without the faintest sign of agitation shrugged her shoulders, and looked interrogatively at Robert.

"It seems I am very like somebody else, after all," she said.

"What's up, Stone?" enquired young

Hansard, laughing; "you look fearfully upset. Why should a chance likeness affect you so strongly?"

The barrister's eyes were still riveted on Rosalind's face, and now, in a voice of intense indignation, he demanded:

"Girl, how dare you?"

It was only natural that Robert should resent this, especially as Rosalind, colouring deeply, had drawn close to him with a frightened cry for protection.

"Stone, be good enough to remember that Miss Jackson is engaged to me and that I pardon no insult offered her."

Robert spoke hotly, and Stone was recalled to himself.

"Forgive me," he said slowly, passing his hand across his forehead; "I was taken utterly aback. I could not have believed it possible that two such faces existed."

Almost the words her mother had used! Rosalind felt that the battle was not won yet.

"Have I a double, Mr. Stone?" she asked with well-feigned nervousness.

"Let us drop the subject," said Stone. "I have to apologise to you, Miss Jackson, but your extraordinary likeness to a girl I once knew, brought vividly before me a most painful episode in the life of my dearest friend. I have never forgiven and never shall forgive that girl. Let us say no more about her."

A significant look at Rosalind told her plainly that he utterly disbelieved her denial of identity. She drew herself up and returned coldly:

"As you please, Mr. Stone; the subject is certainly far from agreeable to me."

Her self-possession was so complete as to stagger Paul Stone. Indeed, had he not had previous experience of Norah Field's histrionic ability, he must have been convinced that he had made a mistake.

Even as it was he chose to appear satisfied, and the party went in to lunch laughing over the incivility with which he had greeted Rosalind. So far as the Hansards were concerned her triumph was complete. Neither Nettie nor Mrs. Hansard could believe that she had ever seen Stone before. Her perfectly easy and natural manner at an unexpected meeting with him seemed to establish beyond doubt the fact that he was a stranger to her.

"If there had been a sudden unpleasant recognition," argued Nettie, "she must have shown it in some way or other, but her self-possession was never shaken for an instant; her colour never even changed till he hurled that 'How dare you?' at her,

and then she flushed up naturally enough. I know I shouldn't like to have Mr. Stone look at me and speak to me like that."

"I don't suppose anybody would," said Mrs. Hansard. "Rosalind really took it very well. And yet," she added with a sigh, "it's uncomfortable, because we know so little of Rosalind's past. Robert takes everything on trust. I can't help wishing he would enquire a little further into her antecedents. Then such a mistake as Mr. Stone's would be merely laughable—as it is I wish it hadn't happened."

"Don't let it worry you, mother dear," said Nettie philosophically; "after all, these marvellous likenesses are known to exist sometimes, and Mr. Stone, remember, is not such a keen observer of women as to make it unlikely that he could be mistaken."

And here for the present the matter ended. During the rest of his visit Paul Stone treated Rosalind courteously, and gave his friends to understand that he admitted his error. On the Sunday evening Robert pressed for an explanation of his outbreak of anger at the sight of the supposed Norah Field, but Stone declined to give it, merely stating that a girl of that name had greatly injured a friend of his some three years ago.

"Your sister has altered a good deal," he said, abruptly changing the subject. "I remember her as a child of twelve, a sedate thoughtful little thing, hardly to be cajoled into joining in any active amusement. She is younger now."

"Younger than she was six years ago?" said Robert, laughing. "Well, perhaps you are right, she is certainly less demure and dignified. But in some ways she is absurdly old—in her choice of literature, for instance, her views of mankind generally, and her philosophical habit of mind. To my mind she still wants stirring up, she is like stagnant water by the side of Rosalind."

The comparison irritated Paul beyond measure, but he let it pass in silence. Nettie like stagnant water! Quiet on the surface, perhaps, but did it need a stranger to see how the clear deep pool of her mind was kept fresh by a running stream of thought beneath? He would not soon forget their long walk that afternoon, when he had fallen to his share as a companion and had interested him as no woman had ever done before.

Nettie, on her side, was a little annoyed and a good deal surprised at the freedom with which she had opened out to Paul

Stone, at the rapidity with which her usual uncommunicativeness and reserve had broken down before his kindly manner. Another time she would not suffer herself to be drawn out so easily. And yet she had never enjoyed talking to anyone so much before. When he left by an early train on Monday she felt disappointed that nothing was said to him about coming again.

Rosalind was far from easy in mind.

"Mother, we have not heard the last of Paul Stone," she said, the first time she saw Mrs. Jackson alone after taking leave of the barrister; "he means mischief."

"What can he do beyond asserting that you are Norah Field?"

"He can prove his assertion by tracing us."

"Impossible!"

"Hate like his is not to be baffled by apparent impossibility," said Rosalind; "we gave him the slip successfully once, it is true, but I felt sure at the time that it was only because Cecil Hibbert insisted on his leaving us in peace."

"But having entirely lost sight of us, knowing nothing of what became of us then, how could he ferret us out now? We have been to every part of France and Germany, changed our name twice and our way of living fifty times; it seems to me an absolute impossibility that he should ever identify us with the Fields he knew."

"You forget that there are one or two people in London who know of our being here, and several besides himself who would swear to our identity. Suppose he were to bring down a few of our old acquaintances, what then? Even if I could succeed in maintaining that my only connection with Norah Field is an extraordinary likeness to her, would anyone be credulous enough to believe that your likeness to Mrs. Field is equally accidental?"

Mrs. Jackson was silent, unable to meet this by any more hopeful assertions, and Rosalind continued:

"There is nothing for it but hurrying on my wedding. If I could be married at once, Paul Stone would keep silence for Robert's sake."

"At any rate he couldn't separate you then. Yes, get married as fast as you can; and, Rosalind," the widow added, with a touch of pathos, "when you are lifted out of all the bad hard life we've led, don't turn your back on me."

Rosalind put her pretty face down and kissed her mother's cheek. The girl was

destitute of a conscience, almost of any sense of right or wrong, but she was attached as warmly as was possible for her to the mother who had been her sworn ally and supporter ever since, at the age of seventeen, she had entered upon a life of wilful wrong-doing.

"Mother, how can you talk so? You shall never know what it is to wonder where the next money is coming from, or how the bills are to be met. I shall make you an allowance and expect you to live in style. Unless my own castle comes down with a crash first," she ended with a return of uneasiness in her tone.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM that moment it was a race between Rosalind and Paul Stone. Her part was easy. Given a man thoroughly in love, the slightest, most indirect hint suffices to put it into his head to press for an early wedding, and Rosalind succeeded in drawing the request from Robert without his suspecting that she had herself suggested the idea to him.

Meanwhile Paul Stone, as she had rightly surmised, was bent upon exposing her, and so saving his friend from marrying one utterly unworthy of him.

It was long before he obtained the faintest clue to the movements of the Fields after their disappearance from London some years before, and even when the clue was put into his hands he found it impossible to follow it up. But in finding people who had been her witnesses in the action brought by her against his friend, Cecil Hibbert, he was more successful, and at last by a train of circumstances too long to recount in detail, he held in his hands the proofs of Rosalind Jackson's identity with Norah Field.

He was still hesitating as to the best and gentlest way of breaking the miserable news to Robert Hansard when a letter from the latter informed him of his approaching wedding. Twice already the banns had been read in church, and in a few days' time he would be married.

The letter was joyful, even exultant in tone, and Paul felt that the task before him of dashing the young fellow's hopes to the ground was the hardest that he had ever been called upon to perform. Should he see Robert, or write to him? Or—and at this thought his drawn brows relaxed somewhat—should he run down to Cookham Dean, see Rosalind, and give her the chance of breaking off the match

herself? Almost mechanically he drew out his watch—five-thirty—too late for that day, of course, and on the morrow professional work would keep him engaged in town till late at night. Impatiently he resigned himself to waiting till the day after.

The Jacksons—mother and daughter—were, two days later, busy putting the finishing touches to the trousseau, when Paul rang their visitor's bell. At the sound of his voice asking for Miss Jackson both gave a start. They knew, before the servant entered and handed them his card, who their visitor was.

The girl had no sooner left the room than Rosalind and her mother, as if involuntarily, rose and faced one another, white to the lips.

"Don't see him," said Mrs. Jackson in a dry, hoarse whisper.

"Not see him!" exclaimed Rosalind. "I must! What does he know? What does he intend to do? Shall I let him go straight to the Hansards, or does he come from them? If he has exposed us to Robert it is all over with us—all over—we are ruined!"

"Courage, Rosalind," said her mother, "don't give up without a struggle—throw yourself upon his mercy!"

"His mercy!" repeated Rosalind bitterly. "Cecil Hibbert's friend have mercy upon me!"

Mrs. Jackson was silent. Experience told her that this first outbreak of terror and agitation on Rosalind's part would be succeeded by a perfectly self-possessed consideration of her position and of the best course to pursue. And so it was. Rosalind grew calm and rapidly chose her ground. Denial and defiance were useless now. She must represent herself as penitent, miserable, helpless, and throw herself upon the barrister's mercy. In this her beauty, and, even more than her beauty, her gift of appropriate speech and gesture, would stand her in good stead. Hard as Paul Stone was, she might move him by her appeal. It was characteristic of Rosalind that at this juncture she should be careful of her appearance. She wore a silver locket and chain round her neck and a number of bangles on her wrists. All these were laid aside, as also a dainty apron she had donned to work in.

"The simpler the better," she said as she found her mother watching her.

"Yes, yes," assented Mrs. Jackson; "and, Rosalind, a word of warning—don't exaggerate. Any exhibition of distress would

be repugnant to him; restrained misery, silent despair, that is the sort of thing."

Rosalind nodded her head; the warning was unnecessary, for she knew her man. Slowly she crossed the narrow hall, slowly turned the handle of the drawing-room door and stood with head erect before her opponent. With head erect, for she did not intend to commit the blunder of assuming Paul Stone's ability to prove anything against her. But in the stern face she read her doom, and before the calm gaze of her judge her eyes sank to the ground. Paul had never seemed so imposing as now, when drawn to his full unbending height he received her as one wholly in his power.

"Norah Field," he said, addressing her by that name now in a tone that indicated his complete knowledge of her identity. Rosalind did not shrink, but Stone noticed that she grasped hold of the back of a chair as if for support.

"Yes, Mr. Stone."

He had expected to be obliged to extort this admission from her and was surprised at her making it so readily.

"I wished to see you," he continued, "before I spoke to Robert Hansard, and told him whom he was about to make his wife. You, who wrecked the life of my dearest friend, will understand that it is impossible for me to allow this marriage."

He saw that the drooping figure before him was trembling violently, and his compassion was aroused.

"The punishment now falling upon you is heavy," he said more gently, "but it is strictly just. Hitherto you have escaped entirely, but at length the time has come for you too to suffer. I don't know whether you really care for Hansard or not—I find it difficult to believe that you should care for anyone in earnest—but I warn you fairly that you will never marry him. I have only to show him certain papers in my possession and to bring you and your mother face to face with certain people in his presence, to convince him of your unworthiness."

Rosalind was still silent, but trembling so terribly now that she could stand no longer. With a faint choking sob she fell on her knees beside a low table and buried her face in her hands.

Stone was sorely tried; never in his life had he seemed to himself such a brute. But his sense of justice remained unmoved, and he paid no heed to her change of attitude.

"One thing more and I have finished,"

he said; "take your choice between two alternatives—either leave Cookham Dean at once, breaking entirely with Robert Hansard, or wait and hear me accuse you to him. Choose."

Rosalind rose to her feet again, colourless, but self-controlled. Stone could not but admire the brave way in which she received the blow.

"Will you let me speak?" she asked in a low restrained voice, and fixing her eyes pleadingly upon his face.

"Certainly," he replied briefly.

"When—when all that happened," she said, "I was seventeen. Do you think a girl, a child of seventeen, was capable of planning and carrying out that elaborate scheme against Cecil Hibbert? Oh, if you knew how I suffered. We were miserably poor, and he befriended us. I never forgot that—I would not have harmed a hair of his head. But my mother and uncle had me in their power; they forced me to lie, to act, to perjure myself; and then when the case was won, and the money gained, they hurried me away to prevent my spoiling all by a confession. Since then I have repented bitterly. I have tried hard to live a good life. Have mercy, and do not betray me now!"

"Wait!" Stone interrupted her. "Answer a few questions. How are you and your mother living now? Not on Hibbert's money still?"

"No; we—we have not much. We won a good deal at Monaco last year, and—Uncle Simon died and left us some."

"What does Robert imagine you to be living on?"

"Money left to my mother by my father."

"Does he know a single truth about you?"

Rosalind was silent till he repeated his question, and then she faltered out:

"Have pity on me. What could I do?"

Paul turned away abruptly.

"Your behaviour to him has been one long falsehood," he said harshly; "and you ask me to be a party to it—to screen you and deceive him. I, Cecil Hibbert's friend, am to stoop to dishonourable treachery for your sake!"

The scorn in his tone was unmistakable, and a low wail of despair broke from Rosalind.

Swiftly she reviewed her position. Should she accept the alternative of immediate flight, or should she brave the worst and seek to convince Robert of her struggles after goodness and her honest repentance for past wrong-doing. Great

as was her power over him, she knew that the latter course was impossible. Again and again she had noticed in Robert a hatred of deceit which would lead him to turn from her story in horror and disgust.

One more attempt at softening Paul Stone, and if that failed, she would yield and go. This time she spoke passionately, though still careful to maintain an appearance of self-restraint.

"Does honour mean cruelty?" she demanded. "Are you bound, for the sake of your honour, to persecute me relentlessly and to make Robert miserable? Is it manly to hunt down a girl who has once done wrong and to rake up the past against her? If you do this, you throw two women without hope upon the world; and all the harm that came of it, all the wickedness we might be obliged to resort to for a living, would be upon your head! I ask you, Paul Stone, what right have you to push us over the precipice for ever?"

Rosalind's breast was heaving, and she stood with brilliant dilated eyes like a desperate creature at bay, struggling for life itself.

Paul was staggered by her question and half dazzled by the beautiful daring face. Involuntarily he stepped backwards and laid his hands over his eyes as if to shut out a vision that tempted him to make his judgment blind.

Rosalind perceived her advantage and was not slow to follow it up. Her whole manner and attitude changed. Once more the pliant figure sank to the ground, while her face assumed an expression of intense anxious humility.

"Ah, you cannot help pitying me!" she said brokenly. "You are not inexorable. You see that justice here would more than punish me—would condemn me to lifelong misery. Listen! I swear to be a good and true wife to Robert. Have mercy on me; keep my wretched secret, and let me redeem the past!"

Paul believed her to be speaking the truth. His heart failed him, and bitterness finally yielded to compassion.

Yet even at this moment the self-discipline of many years forbade his acting on impulse.

"I can give no promise now," he said gently, stooping over the kneeling girl; "but if it is possible I will spare you and keep silent."

The two figures—Rosalind on her knees and Stone bending towards her—were clearly seen by a third person who at that instant entered by the window. It was

Robert Hansard, who, to avoid ringing the bell, had walked up through the garden and chosen this mode of ingress.

Rosalind sprang to her feet, while Stone, raising his head, quietly surveyed the new comer with a look neither of surprise nor confusion, but of profound commiseration.

Robert, who had hastened up from Cookham in great agitation about a wholly different matter, flushed scarlet, and when Rosalind drew nearer to him, put her ungently aside.

"I demand an explanation," he said violently.

"My lips are sealed," returned Stone, glancing significantly at Rosalind.

The girl, whose courage was certainly worthy of a nobler nature, again approached her lover.

"Robert," she said softly, with a world of entreaty in the eyes that had hitherto exercised unlimited power over him, "I will tell you everything if Mr. Stone will leave us alone together."

"That is not sufficient," said Robert roughly; "tell me before him what has passed between you."

Stone was surprised that Hansard should so address himself to Rosalind, and the girl too felt that his manner was prompted by something more than anger at the scene he had just witnessed.

"Let me speak, Robert," she said imploringly. "There was a dark passage in my life once, and Mr. Stone knew of it. But even he only pities me now, and I know that if I confess it all to you, you will forgive me."

Robert gave a short bitter laugh.

"Has it anything to do with this?" he asked, drawing a letter from his pocket.

"What letter is that?" asked Rosalind quickly, unable wholly to repress her alarm.

He merely showed her the heading of it, and Rosalind, at the first glance, went a deadly white. For the first time her nerve deserted her; she knew she could brave the torrent no longer; do what she would it must engulf her. She uttered not a word.

"You, I suppose, were aware of this," said Robert, turning to Stone and giving him the letter. It was headed, "Office of the Charity Organisation Society," and informed General Hansard, as local magistrate, that a Mrs. and Miss Jackson, residing at Cookham, had been suspected for some time past of gaining money on false pretences, that the charge could now be substantiated and proved, and that the society would be glad of his co-operation in the matter.

Paul Stone read the letter in silence, but Rosalind could not doubt its effect upon him.

"That is all new to me," he said; "but the disclosure opens my lips to speak of what I do know. Norah Field, do you still expect mercy from me?"

Rosalind gave no answer, but went towards the door.

"Stay!" said Stone peremptorily.

Once more the girl's spirit rose.

"I will not," she returned, drawing herself up, and fixing her undaunted eyes upon her foe; "your honour demands that you should ruin me. I leave you to accomplish your design behind my back. To you, Robert, I have only to say good-bye!"

She had never looked more beautiful than at this moment, when flushed with passion and defiance she faced her lover for the last time. A cry of despair escaped the poor young fellow, and as if irresistibly impelled he took a step towards her.

"Rosalind!"

Stone laid a firm hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Let her go, Hansard," he said in a tone of quiet authority. With a groan Robert submitted. The door closed, and the two men were left alone together.

"Go on, Stone," said Robert, flinging himself into a chair and leaning his head on his hands; "tell me everything."

"Not here, my poor boy. Come away. I can tell you on the way home."

Robert rose with a gesture of assent, and they passed through the open window into the garden and thence into the road. Paul's story took long in the telling, but briefly it was this:

Four years ago Cecil Hibbert, a rising young doctor, had been present at a London street accident, in which a young girl was severely injured. He hastened to her assistance, took her home, and attended her through the long illness that followed.

The girl, who was exceedingly lovely and attractive, lived alone with her mother, an actress of no great repute and miserably poor. Noticing the wretched circumstances in which his patient was placed, Hibbert not only gave his professional attendance gratuitously, but generously supplied her with the comforts he deemed necessary for her complete recovery. His frequent visits suggested to Mrs. Field the feasibility of inveigling him into a marriage with her daughter, and for this end she schemed incessantly, the girl entering into

her designs nothing loth. Hibbert, a chivalrous unsuspecting nature, continued his visits, never dreaming of the trap laid before him. At last the day of enlightenment came. He became engaged to a Miss Le Mesurier, to whom he had been long attached, and on hearing of the engagement Norah Field brought an action against him for breach of promise of marriage. Her case, artfully conceived, supported by the evidence of perjured witnesses and forged letters, and carried out with unparalleled effrontery, was successful, the jury awarding heavy damages to the lovely and much-injured Miss Field.

Miss Le Mesurier broke off her engagement, and poor Hibbert, robbed at one blow of wife and honour, went out as army-surgeon to the seat of war in Afghanistan, and there sought and found release from his trouble in death.

Robert listened as one in a horrible dream. Needless to describe his anguish or the sense of utter desolation that overcame him as he looked into the blank cheerless future. Stone treated him with a gentleness and forbearance prompted not so much by sympathy as by the memory of Hibbert's suffering on losing his bride.

When Cookham Lodge was reached it fell to the barrister to give an account of what had passed to the Hansards; and Nettie, in all her sympathy with Robert, found time to notice Mr. Stone's tact and good-feeling.

There is little more to add. The Jacksons, after escaping the hands of justice by immediate flight, pursued their former mode of life at various foreign watering-places. Such people are bound to fall upon their feet, and Paul Stone for one was not surprised to hear, some months later, of Rosalind's marriage to a wealthy elderly man. By that time, however, the young barrister's distrust of women in general had yielded to a new creed concerning them, for Nettie Hansard, as his future wife, had acquainted him with the opposite possibilities of womanhood, and taught him to regard Rosalind as an abnormal specimen of feminine unworthiness.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXII. HARRY ANNESLEY IS SUMMONED HOME.

"JUST now I am triumphant," Harry Annesley had said to his hostess as he left Mrs. Armitage's house in The Paragon, at Cheltenham. He was absolutely triumphant, throwing his hat up into the air in the abandonment of his joy. For he was not a man to have conceived so well of his own parts as to have flattered himself that the girl must certainly be his. There are at present a number of young men about who think that few girls are worth the winning, but that any girl is to be had, not by asking—which would be troublesome—but simply by looking at her. You can see the feeling in their faces. They are for the most part small in stature, well made little men, who are aware that they have something to be proud of, wearing close-packed shining little hats, by which they seem to add more than a cubit to their stature, men endowed with certain gifts of personal—dignity I may perhaps call it, though the word rises somewhat too high. They look as though they would be able to say a clever thing; but their spoken thoughts seldom rise above a small acrid sharpness. They respect no one; above all, not their elders. To such a one his horse comes first, if he have a horse; then a dog; and then a stick; and after that the mistress of his affections. But their fault is not altogether of their own making. It is the girls themselves who spoil them and endure their inanity, because of that assumed look of superiority which to the eyes of the outside world would be a little offensive were it not a little foolish. But they do not marry often. Whether it

be that the girls know better at last, or that they themselves do not see sufficiently clearly their future dinners, who can say? They are for the most part younger brothers, and perhaps have discovered the best way of getting out of the world whatever scraps the world can afford them. Harry Annesley's faults were altogether of another kind. In regard to this young woman, the Florence whom he had loved, he had been over modest. Now his feeling of glory was altogether redundant. Having been told by Florence that she was devoted to him, he walked with his head among the heavens. The first instinct with such a young man as those of whom I have spoken teaches him, the moment he has committed himself, to begin to consider how he can get out of the scrape. It is not much of a scrape, for when an older man comes this way, a man verging towards baldness, with a good professional income, our little friend is forgotten and he is passed by without a word. But Harry had now a conviction—on that one special night—that he never would be forgotten and never would forget. He was filled at once with an unwonted pride. All the world was now at his feet, and all the stars were open to him. He had begun to have a glimmering of what it was that Augustus Scarborough intended to do; but the intentions of Augustus Scarborough were now of no moment to him. He was clothed in a panoply of armour which would be true against all weapons. At any rate, on that night and during the next day this feeling remained the same with him.

Then he received a summons from his mother at Buston. His mother pressed him to come at once down to the parsonage. "Your uncle has been with your father, and has said terrible things about

you. As you know, my brother is not very strong-minded, and I should not care so much for what he says were it not that so much is in his hands. I cannot understand what it is all about, but your father says that he does nothing but threaten. He talks of putting the entail on one side. Entails used to be fixed things, I thought; but since what old Mr. Scarborough did, nobody seems to regard them now. But even suppose the entail does remain, what are you to do about the income? Your father thinks you had better come down and have a little talk about the matter."

This was the first blow received since the moment of his exaltation. Harry knew very well that the entail was fixed and could not be put aside by Mr. Prosper, though Mr. Scarborough might have succeeded with his entail; but yet he was aware that his present income was chiefly dependent on his uncle's good will. To be reduced to live on his fellowship would be very dreadful. And that income, such as it was, depended entirely on his celibacy. And he had too, as he was well aware, engendered habits of idleness during the last two years. The mind of a young man so circumstanced turns always first to the bar, and then to literature. At the bar he did not think that there could be any opening for him. In the first place, it was late to begin; and then he was humble enough to believe of himself that he had none of the peculiar gifts necessary for a judge or for an advocate. Perhaps the knowledge that six or seven years of preliminary labour would be necessary was a deterrent.

The rewards of literature might be achieved immediately. Such was his idea. But he had another idea—perhaps as erroneous—that this career would not become a gentleman who intended to be squire of Buston. He had seen two or three men, decidedly Bohemian in their modes of life, to whom he did not wish to assimilate himself. There was Quaverdale, whom he had known intimately at St. John's, and who was on the Press. Quaverdale had quarrelled absolutely with his father, who was also a clergyman, and having been thrown altogether on his own resources, had come out as a writer for *The Coming Hour*. He made his five or six hundred a year in a rattling, loose, uncertain sort of fashion, and was—so thought Harry Annesley—the dirtiest man of his acquaintance. He did not believe in the six hundred a year, or Quaverdale would

certainly have changed his shirt more frequently, and would sometimes have had a new pair of trousers. He was very amusing, very happy, very thoughtless, and as a rule altogether impecunious. Annesley had never known him without the means of getting a good dinner, but those means did not rise to the purchase of a new hat. Putting Quaverdale before him as an example, Annesley could not bring himself to choose literature as a profession. Thinking of all this when he received his mother's letter, he assured himself that Florence would not like professional literature.

He wrote to say that he would be down at Buston in five days' time. It does not become a son who is a fellow of a college and the heir to a property to obey his parents too quickly. But he gave up the intermediate days to thinking over the condition which bound him to his uncle, and to discussing his prospects with Quaverdale, who, as usual, was remaining in town doing the editor's work for *The Coming Hour*. "If he interfered with me I should tell him to go to bed," said Quaverdale. The allusion was of course made to Mr. Prosper.

"I am not on those sort of terms with him."

"I should make my own terms, and then let him do his worst. What can he do? If he means to withdraw his beggarly two hundred and fifty pounds, of course he'll do it."

"I suppose I do owe him something, in the way of respect."

"Not if he threatens you in regard to money. What does it come to? That you are to cringe at his heels for a beggarly allowance which he has been pleased to bestow upon you without your asking. 'Very well, my dear fellow,' I should say to him, 'you can stop it the moment you please. For certain objects of your own—that your heir might live in the world after a certain fashion—you have bestowed it. It has been mine since I was a child. If you can reconcile it to your conscience to discontinue it, do so.' You would find that he would have to think twice about it."

"He will stop it, and what am I to do then? Can I get an opening on any of these papers?" Quaverdale whistled—a mode of receiving the overture which was not pleasing to Annesley. "I don't suppose that anything so very superhuman in the way of intellect is required." Annesley had got a fellowship, whereas Quaverdale had done nothing at the university.

"Couldn't you make a pair of shoes? Shoemakers do get good wages."

"What do you mean? A fellow never can get you to be serious for two minutes together."

"I never was more serious in my life."

"That I am to make shoes?"

"No, I don't quite think that. I don't suppose you can make them. You'd have first to learn the trade, and show that you were an adept."

"And I must show that I am an adept before I can write for *The Coming Hour*." There was a tone of sarcasm in this which was not lost on Quaverdale.

"Certainly you must; and that you are a better adept than I who have got the place, or some other unfortunate who will have to be put out of his berth. *The Coming Hour* only requires a certain number. Of course there are many newspapers in London, and many magazines, and much literary work going. You may get your share of it, but you have got to begin by shoving some incompetent fellow out. And in order to be able to begin you must learn the trade."

"How did you begin?"

"Just in that way. While you were roaming about London like a fine gentleman, I began by earning twenty-four shillings a week."

"Can I earn twenty-four shillings a week?"

"You won't, because you have already got your fellowship. You had a knack at writing Greek Iambics, and therefore got a fellowship. I picked up at the same time the way of stringing English together. I also soon learned the way to be hungry. I'm not hungry now very often, but I've been through it. My belief is that you wouldn't get along with my editor."

"That's your idea of being independent."

"Certainly it is. I do his work and take his pay, and obey his orders. If you think you can do the same, come and try. There's not room here, but there is no doubt room elsewhere. There's the trade to be learned like any other trade; but my belief is that even then you could not do it. We don't want Greek Iambics."

Harry turned away disgusted. Quaverdale was like the rest of the world, and thought that a peculiar talent and a peculiar tact were needed for his own business. Harry believed that he was able to write a leading article at any rate as Quaverdale, and that the Greek Iambics

would not stand in his way. But he conceived it to be probable that his habits of cleanliness might do so, and gave up the idea for the present. He thought that his friend should have welcomed him with an open hand into the realms of literature; and, perhaps, it was the case that Quaverdale attributed too much weight to the knack of turning readable paragraphs on any subject at a moment's notice.

But what should he do down at Buston? There were three persons there with whom he would have to contend: his father, his mother, and his uncle. With his father he had always been on good terms; but had still been subject to a certain amount of gentle sarcasm. He had got his fellowship and his allowance, and had so been lifted above his father's authority. His father thoroughly despised his brother-in-law, and looked down upon him as an absolute ass. But he was reticent, only dropping a word here and there, out of deference, perhaps, to his wife, and from a feeling lest his son might be deficient in wise courtesy, if he were encouraged to laugh at his benefactor. He had said a word or two as to a profession when Harry left Cambridge; but the word or two had come to nothing. In those days the uncle had altogether ridiculed the idea, and the mother, fond of her son, the fellow and the heir, had altogether opposed the notion. The rector himself was an idle, good-looking, self-indulgent man—a man who read a little and understood what he read, and thought a little and understood what he thought; but who took no trouble about anything. To go through the world comfortably with a rather large family and a rather small income, was the extent of his ambition. In regard to his eldest son he had begun well. Harry had been educated free, and had got a fellowship. He had never cost his father a shilling. And now the eldest of two grown-up daughters was engaged to be married to the son of a brewer living in the little town of Buntingford. This also was a piece of good luck which the rector accepted with a thankful heart. There was another grown-up girl, also pretty, and then a third girl not grown up, and the two boys, who were at present at school at Royston. Thus burdened the Reverend Mr. Annesley went through the world, with as jaunty a step as was possible, making but little of his troubles, but anxious to make as much as he could of his advantages. Of these the position of Harry was the brightest, if only Harry

would be careful to guard it. It was quite out of the question that he should find an income for Harry if the squire stopped the two hundred and fifty pounds per annum which he at present allowed him.

Then there was Harry's mother, who had already very frequently discounted the good things which were to fall to Harry's lot. She was a dear, good, motherly woman, all whose geese were certainly counted to be swans. And of all swans Harry was the whitest; whereas, in purity of plumage, Mary, the eldest daughter, who had won the affections of the young Buntingford brewer, was the next. That Harry's allowance should be stopped would be almost as great a misfortune as though Mr. Thoroughbury were to break his neck out hunting with the Parkeridge hounds—an amusement which, after the manner of brewers, he was much in the habit of following. Mrs. Annealey had lived at Buston all her life, having been born at the Hall. She was an excellent mother of a family, and a good clergyman's wife, being in both respects more painstaking and assiduous than her husband. But she did maintain something of respect for her brother, though in her inmost heart she knew that he was a fool. But to have been born Squire of Buston was something, and to have reached the age of fifty unmarried, so as to leave the position of heir open to her own son was, more. To such a one a great deal was due; but of that deal Harry was but little disposed to pay any part. He must be talked to, and very seriously talked to, and if possible saved from the sin of offending his easily-offended uncle. A terrible idea had been suggested to her lately by her husband. The entail might be made altogether inoperative by the marriage of her brother. It was a fearful notion, but one which if it entered into her brother's head might possibly be carried out. No one before had ever dreamed of anything so dangerous to the Annealey interests, and Mrs. Annealey now felt that by due submission on the part of the heir it might be avoided.

But the squire himself was the foe whom Harry most feared. He quite understood that he would be required to be submissive, and, even if he were willing, he did not know how to act the part. There was much now that he would endure for the sake of Florence. If Mr. Prosper demanded that after dinner he should sit and hear a sermon, he would sit and hear it

out. It would be a bore, but might be endured on behalf of the girl whom he loved. But he much feared that the cause of his uncle's displeasure was deeper than that. A rumour had reached him that his uncle had declared his conduct to Mountjoy Scarborough to have been abominable. He had heard no words spoken by his uncle, but threats had reached him through his mother, and also through his uncle's man of business. He certainly would go down to Buston, and carry himself towards his uncle with what outward signs of respect would be possible. But, if his uncle accused him, he could not but tell his uncle that he knew nothing of the matter of which he was talking. Not for all Buston could he admit that he had done anything mean or ignoble. Florence, he was quite sure, would not desire it. Florence would not be Florence were she to desire it. He thought that he could trace the hands—or rather the tongues—through which the calumny had made its way down to the Hall. He would at once go to the Hall, and tell his uncle all the facts. He would describe the gross ill-usage to which he had been subjected. No doubt he had left the man sprawling upon the pavement; but there had been no sign that the man had been dangerously hurt; and when two days afterwards the man had vanished, it was clear that he could not have vanished without legs. Had he taken himself off—as was probable—then why need Harry trouble himself as to his vanishing? If someone else had helped him in escaping—as was also probable—why had not that someone come and told the circumstances when all the enquiries were being made? Why should he have been expected to speak of the circumstances of such an encounter, which could not have been told but to Captain Scarborough's infinite disgrace? And he could not have told of it without naming Florence Mountjoy. His uncle, when he heard the truth, must acknowledge that he had not behaved badly. And yet Harry, as he turned it all in his mind, was uneasy as to his own conduct. He could not quite acquit himself in that he had kept secret all the facts of that midnight encounter in the face of the enquiries which had been made, in that he had falsely assured Augustus Scarborough of his ignorance. And yet he knew that on no consideration would he acknowledge himself to have been wrong.

THE UTILISATION OF NATURAL FORCES.

ELECTRICITY has at length been caught and imprisoned in a tactual form. The subtle sprite, more powerful in its capabilities than Ariel, more marvellous in its magic than Puck, has now become a thing so material as to fall within the scope of a parcels' delivery company for transmission; and we begin to anticipate as not far distant the time when steam and manual labour shall be no more, but force, in a condensed and palpable form, shall be brought to our doors daily, and retailed in measured quantities like the morning milk. But from what source will this force be obtained? and how immediately will these recent electrical discoveries affect the solution of the problem—undoubtedly the grandest of the age—how to adapt to our own ends those vast powers of Nature which are manifested all around us?

Physicists tell us that all forces are convertible—heat into electricity, electricity into motion, and so on—in certain definite proportions which are reducible to as absolute a scale as the multiplication-table. Force has been stated to be the relation between different forms of matter, manifested while their constituent atoms are undergoing chemical or structural changes, or forming new elementary combinations. All matter, liquid, solid, gaseous, animate or inanimate, may thus be said to have a certain amount of force locked up in it, and requiring only some given stimulus for its production and translation to some other body; for when we speak, as we often do, of waste force, we imply, not that such power has been lost in the sense of ceasing to exist, but that its particular manifestation in some instance was not seized upon for application to human purposes. Since the world was created, not a grain of its substance has been lost, nor has the actual quantity of any of the elements of which it is built up been altered; though variation of their relative proportions in their combinations is constantly taking place, and indeed constitutes force itself. Nor, as far as we know, has any atom ever been added to the universe, if we except those small occasional masses called meteorites, or vulgarly thunderbolts, the origin of which has not been clearly made out; the generally received opinion being, however, that such of these bodies as are not formed by electric fusion of the soil where they are

discovered—as many no doubt are—come from our own volcanoes. It follows, then, that the earth was established with a fixed amount of inherent force in it, and that this amount has never changed since the Creation. It may differ considerably in the manner or intensity of its indication; witness the oft-quoted example of the conversion of iron into rust—that is, the union of its particles with oxygen under certain conditions, forming an oxide. This may be effected rapidly by burning iron wire or filings in oxygen-gas, during which intense heat is evolved; or it may be submitted to the slower combustion which takes place when it rusts from exposure to the air, but in either case exactly the same amount of force—heat—is developed. In the former, it is evident; in the latter, the process is so slow and gradual that the increase of temperature is not appreciable.

Look at the huge natural powers on every side, any one of which would supply motive power for all the mechanism on the face of the globe, could it be brought to bear on the scene of action—the rise and fall of tides, the impetus of waves, rivers, and cataracts, the force of the winds, the spontaneous evolution of electricity, and the light, actinism, and heat of the sun. With regard to the last-mentioned power, a complete arrangement of lenses has recently been devised, which causes water to boil under the influence of the sun's rays; and its inventor has published details on which he bases the calculation that a strip of land, one hundred miles long and one mile broad, in the tropics, would furnish enough sun-power to generate sufficient steam for the working of all the machinery in the world. And when we see a windmill with its fans in revolution by the action of a gentle breeze, and contrast that with the tremendous impulse of a hurricane or typhoon, travelling at the rate of a hundred miles an hour; or a tiny rivulet turning a huge wheel, and think of the million-fold capabilities of Niagara (to which Sir William Thompson, Mr. Siemens, and other practical scientific men are now turning their attention); we become aware of the tremendous loss man sustains in his inability to make use of these gigantic engines. Take steam, again. To get steam we must have coal—for the few substitutes that have been recently tried are only experimental curiosities, as yet; and it is the cost of this coal that is the grand expense, and oftentimes a serious drawback or utter prohibition to undertakings in which steam

is the motor. Some of our great ocean steamship companies, for example, pay a quarter of a million pounds sterling or more for coal annually, the "black diamonds" averaging from two to three pounds per ton, at home and abroad. This, of course, includes freight by sailing vessels to foreign ports, and wharfage and labour there, which in some places raises the price to five pounds per ton. And this specific expense is not the only grave consideration, for it must be remembered that the accommodation necessary for six or eight hundred or a thousand tons of coal cuts a big slice out of a vessel's capacity for cargo and passengers, and that each ship must carry a large staff—far outnumbering the crew proper—of stokers, coal-trimmers, and firemen for the stowing and shifting of the cumbrous stuff. Yet the very medium through which these steamers foam on their course needs but the light touch of a wire to form almost the most calorific fuel known; the combustion of the hydrogen and oxygen resulting from the decomposition of water produces a heat so intense as to melt platinum, and to even volatilise gold to a slight extent. Why, then, have these vast powers never been turned to account, in this age of material utility?

The question of expense is the obstacle with all the means for storing force with which we have hitherto been acquainted. Those means are few at present, and inefficient owing to the costly nature of the direct application of the force in the first instance to the transmitting medium, and the loss of power involved in transit and final connection of the conveyed force. With connecting rods and chains of any great length there is an enormous expenditure of the force in overcoming the vis inertiae of the apparatus itself, owing to its weight, and in the friction of cog-wheels and pulleys. The coiling of a powerful spring might be employed for gradual after-distribution of motive power near at hand, but neither that nor the compression of air is suitable for conveyance to any distance—the latter agency, in addition to this objection, affording no very effective medium in itself. Whether more might not be done by condensing certain gases which are capable of liquefaction under a high pressure—many hundreds of pounds to the square inch—is a suggestion which will perhaps be answered conclusively before long by those scientists who devote their attention to this subject; it seems feasible to imagine that such

liquefied gases might be stored and carried in suitable vessels with very little loss, if any, of the expansive force corresponding to that employed for their condensation, which could be emitted and applied at pleasure by certain simple arrangements.

It is astounding to reflect how very few cases there are in which man has invoked Nature's forces to his aid, even in these days of all-pervading economy—Nature's forces, that is, in the sense in which we have alluded to them, the expression being understood as not inclusive of natural laws. With the familiar exceptions of the windmill and water-wheel, and the sails of a ship—which John Chinaman wisely adapted to his hand-cart or barrow when on a long journey thousands of years ago—we have scarcely a single instance of their use; though we occasionally hear of a structure, like the Clifton suspension-bridge, being raised to its position by the rise and fall of the tides, or of heavy sunken objects recovered and brought to land in tidal docks or estuaries by the same agency. A flat-bottomed barge is towed out and moored over the submerged block of stone, or whatever it is that has been lost; at dead low water a chain is made fast around this, and hauled up tight to a ring or stanchion in the barge. As the tide rises, the barge lifts the ponderous body, and at high water it is floated in towards shore until the weight takes the ground again, owing to the decreased depth of water. Here, again, the lighter is allowed to rest until ebb tide has reached its lowest point, when the chain is shortened to the utmost possible extent; thus, at the next flood, still shallower water is reached, and the process is repeated till the object is either high and dry at low tide, or capable of being treated by ordinary methods of removal from the shore. Suggestions have recently been made that the tidal rise of the river Severn—one of the highest in the world—should do good service to Bristol as prime agent in the lighting of its thoroughfares and buildings by electricity.

A paper was read before the Society of Naval Architects some time ago, in which a proposal was made that wave motion at sea should be compelled to minister to a vessel's speed by means of a suspended weight, oscillating amidships. The vibrations of this pendulum, as the ship rolled, were to coil a huge spring, and this, in its turn, was to work an auxiliary screw when required, in case of calms or

head winds, or to assist on a small scale in the performance of duties such as the working of cargo, setting or taking in sails, or pumping water, now performed by steam-winchies or manual labour. But perhaps the most ingenious application of wave force to mechanism that has ever been perfected is that shown in the construction of Courtenay's Automatic Buoy, already adopted by the Trinity House for use at certain stations around our coast, notably on the north-east Goodwins, the Scilly Isles, and Knapton Sands, off the Nora. Its principle of action is based on the fact that at a distance of about thirty-five feet below the level of the sea, there is no vertical movement of the water whatever. The apparatus may be said roughly to consist of two tubes of the above length; the upper, which rises and falls as the buoy mounts the waves, working within the lower one, which is fixed at one certain depth by its moorings. This continual pump-like movement, by means of certain valves in the interior, causes a store of compressed air to be laid up in the lower tube, which, being perpetually renewed, sounds a loud whistle continuously, and acts as a warning or a guide to mariners in thick fogs and on the darkest night. It is also capable of being graduated in its pressure, so that in very bad weather, when the roar of the wind or waves might presumably drown the scream of the whistle, it can fire a gun or flash a light at intervals; and this would be performed automatically by the very violence of the sea itself, or it can be arranged to indicate when shoals and banks are passable or impassable by vessels not exceeding a certain draught of water, by sounding only when the state of the tide allows a given amount of extension between the two tubes. And may we not hope to see electricity, which bids fair to be not only the moving but the ruling spirit of the future, generated before long by some such inexpensive and automatic adaptation of natural forces?

LADY TEMPLE'S TROUBLE.

CHAPTER I. PLOTTING.

"My dear Sir John, I am very sorry if I hurt your feelings, but I do not like the girl."

"So you have told me before, my dear."

"And you are as far from agreeing with me as ever."

"Well, yes; I confess I can see nothing so very objectionable in poor Julia."

"Poor Julia! She will be rich Julia one of these days, or I am much mistaken!"

Sir John broke into a good-natured laugh.

"Well, let us hope she may be."

"Yes, I could say that, too; but when I consider that it is your money she looks to spending——"

Sir John Temple's blue eyes opened.

"Mine! My dear wife, you must be dreaming."

"On the contrary, on this subject I feel particularly wide-awake—almost as much so as Julia," and her little ladyship put her hand laughingly through her husband's arm. "You have an heir, although"—and here sweet-faced Lady Temple sighed—"no son. Have you really seen nothing? Do you really not know that Miss Slingsby proposes to herself to share that heirship?"

Staid elderly Sir John actually whistled like a school-boy—a whistle expressive of surprise and dismay.

"Ah, you are not much more enamoured with the idea than I."

"I agree with you she is not the woman I should have chosen; but what can we do? It is he who chooses."

"Nay, it is she. That is what I object to."

"But, my love, a man does not marry a girl unless he wants to."

"Doesn't he, my dear! If you were a woman you would know better. Is there really no such thing as flattering your sex into what you think you want—eh, Sir John? It is like tickling trout, my dear—very pleasant, I dare say, but you are caught, and then——"

"And then, if the woman is a good woman, she will make a good wife."

"Ah, but it isn't exactly the 'good women' I am talking about. In plain English, Sir John, though she is your ward, and the daughter of your poor old friend, Julia Slingsby is not half good enough for our Morton. She is ambitious, unscrupulous, and as for heart, she has none—not a shred. In short, she does not love him, and she shall not have him."

"Very good, but how do you propose preventing her?"

"Oh, I am not contemplating any very desperate measures. Julia shall have nothing to complain of. I shall merely try counter-attractions. She and Morton will both be here the end of the month. I must get some of my pet girls down for the vacation, and if that does not succeed,

and knowing—excuse me, my dear—theupidity of your sex, I am not very hopeful.”

“Well, and what then?”

Lady Temple looked up into her husband's face with a wicked smile.

“Why, then you must take to racing, gambling; announce yourself a ruined man, with nothing to leave behind you but mortgaged acres and an empty title. I think that would settle affairs very effectually.”

“A very pretty plot, upon my life. I think I prefer the first suggestion. Let us have down the counter-charms, by all means. Who shall they be? Better have down half-a-dozen or so, and make it safer.”

“I have arranged all that. I intend having a houseful. Everyone is leaving London now, and ready for fresh air and the country. We can find plenty of amusement—boating, tennis, picnics. All we want is fine weather. And now, if you will be off—I see your horse outside—will get to my writing.”

CHAPTER II. DOUBTFUL.

SIR JOHN and Lady Temple, of Temple Court, were no longer young. But at sixty a man should be hale and hearty still, and fit for saddle or stubble for many days to come. And sturdy blue-eyed Sir John was all this. At fifty what should a man be? I cannot say. I only know that Lady Temple was active and light-hearted as many a girl in her twenties. He was a little creature, barely reaching up to Sir John's broad shoulders, and diled him with a fairy rod of love and itchery yet. Her soft brown hair was silvering fast, and gave a strange tender race to a face that bore its look still of youthful espièglerie.

Morton Temple, Sir John's heir and orphan nephew, was almost, although not quite, that a son of their own could have seen to the warm-hearted baronet and his life; so their anxiety in so important a matter as that under discussion is not to be wondered at, and my lady's little plots and plans in the young man's behalf may, I think, be excused.

The Court, of course, was Morton Temple's home; but as he held an appointment under government supposed to entail a daily attendance in the neighbourhood of Downing Street, the greater part of his time was naturally spent in his own.

However, as a couple of hours' run by rail would take him to the Court, many a summer day's close found him there.

Julia Slingsby had now been a ward of Sir John's for nearly twelve months, but she formed no part of the Court household. She and her invalid mother occupied a small house in a semi-fashionable London square; and the fair Julia when oppressed by heat or ennui was also often to be found flying Temple Courtwards in quest of fresh air and—she would scarcely have troubled herself to conceal it, so why should I?—Morton Temple.

The end of the month had arrived, and Lady Temple had gathered her guests around her. All bade fair for the carrying out of her little ladyship's programme. The weather left nothing even for a Briton to grumble at. Days of unclouded sunshine succeeded one another, and if showers fell they selected the hours of early morning to do so, and the world woke cool and refreshed as though new-born.

On the terraces and among the flower-beds below, girlish forms in dainty summer costumes flitted, followed, at no great distance, you may be sure, by light and loosely-clad figures of the other sex.

Lady Temple, in company with a matronly companion or two, looked on in smiling satisfaction. Her young people were having a “good time” of it, and her little ladyship was happy. There was the crumpled rose-leaf, it is true, and it was a very crumpled one indeed, not a bit smoothed out as yet; but her ladyship was of a sunny-hearted nature, and tried to be hopeful and content—tried, but it must be confessed at times found it beyond her. “Morton's stupidity,” she would confide to Sir John, “being something too incredible.”

No, affairs were not altogether promising. The counter-charms were all there—dark, fair, quiet, dashing, but they might almost as well have been elsewhere. Almost, and there lay Lady Temple's one ray of hope, and she made the most of it. There was one exception—one fair and quiet presence there, whom, as her ladyship soon discovered, Morton Temple, spite his “stupidity,” could not quite ignore or forsake, even at the bidding of his Julia.

Mary Holme was only the rector's daughter, and no fitter mate in a worldly point of view for the heir of Temple Court than Julia Slingsby. Indeed, there Julia had rather the advantage, for whereas Mary was penniless, she was possessed of a certain if modest income of her own.

But had the hundreds been thousands they would have influenced her ladyship not one whit.

Mary Holme had always been a favourite at the Court. She and Morton Temple had played together as children, and together roamed the woods and fished the river later on.

Fair and quiet, with all her heart long since given to her old companion, the rector's pretty daughter was, in fact, a far more dangerous rival than the dark dashing Julia would have condescended to believe, or her anxious ladyship have dared to permit herself to hope.

But the days were slipping by. Tennis, boating, picnics, all had their turn, and still the success of my lady's scheme remained as doubtful as ever.

Among the guests was one James Treton, a heavy, foolish-looking young man, with certainly—as the phrase goes—more money than brains. But the lad—for he was but little more, having but the other day come of age, and into his some thousands per annum—was good-hearted and generous-minded enough to have made himself many friends.

Poor James had lost his too susceptible heart the very first night of his arrival, and from that moment there was nothing to be done with him.

Need I say Miss Slingsby was the enslaver? She, on her part, did not certainly refuse his worship. Julia was a young woman too wise in her generation for anything so foolish, but she led him a sad life of it for all that. She smiled on and made much of him when it suited her to do so. She ignored his very existence when that chanced to be more convenient. And all the time the poor foolish fellow was her slave—hers to make use of, to fetch, to carry, to be smiled or frowned on as she saw fit.

Of course Lady Temple saw all that was going on, as who could help doing? Indeed, the faithful James—as the girls had come to call him—would go to her ladyship with his troubles. She was all kindness to him, and, you may be sure, would have helped him if she could.

"He is a world too good for her," Lady Temple confided to her husband; "but then he will never find it out, and that is everything."

No doubt there were other little flirtations, and even it may be courtships going on, but there were other and lawful authorities at hand. if need be. so with

these her ladyship did not trouble herself. It seemed to her as the days went on, and Morton Temple fluttered from Julia Slingsby to his old friend and companion, and James Treton clung pertinaciously to his Chloe's skirts, that she had had something too much of that sort of thing as it was. "Never again," Lady Temple told herself. "No, if this fails they may go their own way. Morton may make himself miserable for life if he will, and poor Mary must break her heart; I cannot help it."

CHAPTER III. MR. HINCLES'S "PORK-MANKEL."

It was the last day but two for the Court guests. The gentlemen were all off to a cricket-match some ten miles away.

I dare say more than one of them would have as soon remained behind. But Sir John himself was to drive them over in the break, so they could not very well get out of it.

The girls had got a little picnic of their own down by the river. Luncheon had been sent to meet them at a chosen spot some mile and a half from the house, and they were to wait on themselves. This they had managed to do very satisfactorily. They had made a goodly onslaught on all the dainties provided, and were now resting in happy laziness after their labours.

"Well, I think we have done very well without the gentlemen, and so I shall tell them," said little Kate Dolby, stretching herself in the sun like a luxurious kitten.

"And of course they will believe you, my dear," said Julia Slingsby. "For me, now, I shall tell their serene mightinesses that it has been unbearable—the abomination of desolation, and that I all but drowned myself."

"They will never believe that," laughed Kate.

"Won't they, Miss Innocence? That and more. Wait and see."

"Well, I am sure both Morton Temple and James Treton would rather have been here than at that stupid cricket," said Nellie Dolby, Kate's elder sister.

"I think we can very well spare the 'faithful James,'" said Julia. "For Morton Temple, what do you say, Mary?"

"I say," answered Mary, laughing, "that I have to spare him so much as it is, that, so far as I am personally concerned, perhaps he may as well be where he is."

Julia laughed too. The admission was

flattering to her vanity. Besides, little as it was in her nature to care for one of her own sex, Mary Holme had contrived to win from her a spark of something very near akin to affection.

A pretty flush had come to Mary's cheek.

"Why, Mary," Julia cried, "I do believe you care for him!"

"Perhaps I do."

"Why, she has known and loved him ever since she cut her first tooth. Haven't you, Mary?"

And Kate Dolby, who was Mary's champion and adorer, and at whose feet she lay stretched, gave her friend's toes an affectionate squeeze.

"I am sure you really don't care for him. Confess it, Julia," said Nellie.

"Why can't you let him go, and be satisfied with your James?" growled Kate.

"My James! I am sure you are all of you welcome to him."

"But you don't care for Morton Temple either," cried half-a-dozen voices.

"I care very much for Temple Court."

"Oh, I dare say James Treton's place is just as fine," said Nellie.

"It's bigger," cried Kate, starting into a sitting position. "He told me so. He said it's like a great barrack, without the company in it. Oh, do take it, Julia. We'll all come and fill it—we will indeed."

Julia laughed good-naturedly.

"I am sure it's very kind of you, Kate, and if ever I inhabit the barrack I shall be glad to see you all—thankful, no doubt. But you see, if I married James Treton, I could never be Lady Temple. Besides—I fear there's no doubt about it—the faithful James's grandpapa sold cheese!"

"But his grandfather is dead, and his cheese all eaten long enough ago," said Kate.

"I can't help it. I should never see a mouse-trap even without thinking of him."

"But if you couldn't be Lady Temple and mistress of the Court, you would overlook the cheese and be reconciled to the mouse-traps—eh?" enquired Kate.

"Possibly. I might do worse. There's plenty of money, and, as for James, I could twist him round my fingers."

"But that is just the sort of husband I shouldn't care for," said Mary.

"Ah! you would prefer being twisted; I shouldn't."

"Well, all I know is," said Kate Dolby,

rising, "I wish you would take your James—and twist him."

"And make Mary a present of Morton! No, my dear, I am afraid I can't afford to be so generous."

"He isn't yours yet," cried Kate, flashing up.

"Come," said Mary, "we are talking great nonsense, and if we want any tea it is time to be starting."

Up at the house meanwhile Lady Temple and her more sober guests were indulging in their share of gossip over their cup of afternoon-tea.

It was just as Mary Holme and her companions were nearing the house on their return from the river-side, that a great peal came at the hall-bell, followed, after some moments' delay, by the re-appearance of the grey-headed butler in the tea-room with a card, which he presented to her ladyship with a somewhat doubtful air.

"Josiah P. Hinckes." There was no doubt about the name. The characters were of such dimensions that short-sighted Lady Temple could read them as the card lay before her.

"Must see Sir John," he says, "my lady. Perticklar business, so I have had him showed to Sir John's orifice to wait."

"A gentleman, Bowers?"

"Well, I should say not exactly, my lady. Not what we are accustomed to, that is, your ladyship."

And Mr. Bowers, who was an old and confidential retainer, looked round with a gaze of such awful solemnity and importance, that little Kate Dolby, who was just entering, and upon whom it fell, cried:

"Good gracious, Bowers, is any one dead?"

Bowers condescended to smile. Kate was an old favourite, and might take liberties.

"A gentleman—leastways an individooal, miss, to see Sir John."

Kate had seized the card.

"Josiah P. Hinckes! Why, the individooal is a—must be a Yankee, Bowers. Hasn't he got an eagle or the star-spangled banner with him—eh, Bowers?"

"He have got nothing but a very small pork mankel, miss, and an 'ook nose, through which he certainly do speak most remarkable."

"Ah!" cried Kate delightedly; "I know the gentleman. Patent sausage-machine inventor, log of wood in at one end, best pork-sausages out at the other;

hatch-your-own-eggs machine, eggs in at one end, fowl ready trussed for dinner at the other. They are all in the small pork-mankel. Do let us see him, Lady Temple."

"Don't be so absurd, Kate," said her ladyship. "Bowers, there is Sir John."

Bowers hurried from the room, and then the gentlemen entering (minus their host) there ensued such a Babel of voices that I shall not attempt to transcribe anything that was said.

When, half an hour later, a message was brought by Bowers from Sir John, begging my lady to go to him in his office, her absence was for a time altogether unnoticed—that is, by the young people.

CHAPTER IV. AFTER ALL.

WHEN Lady Temple answered her husband's summons, she found him pacing the small room set apart for his business transactions, with a perplexed look on his kindly face, and with an excitement of manner strangely at variance with his usual quiet air of happy self-possession. She turned from Sir John to his companion, but there saw nothing to alarm her; only a cool-looking dried-up lath of a man, who greeted her with a little nod-like bow, but did not open his lips.

Perhaps there are few homes to which bad news can scarcely come, but Temple Court was one of these. There were no daughters to elope or make bad matches, no sons to bring disaster or dishonour, equally there were none for death to touch. So although there might be a tinge of anxiety, there was no real alarm in Lady Temple's tone as she enquired of her husband what had happened.

Sir John stopped in his walk and passed his hand across his brow as if to clear away some trouble there.

"Something very strange, my dear, so strange that I seem scarcely to know if I have really heard it or have only gone to sleep and dreamt it."

"You air wide-awake, Sir John Temple. There ain't no dreaming about this. Perhaps her ladyship would like to see the papers, though they air only copies. The originals can be seen at my place over in Ottawa any day you like to come over and ask for 'em, Sir John, and that is what he had better do at once, ma'am."

"What does he mean? What is it all about? Tell me, John."

"Sit down, my love," and Sir John Temple drew up a chair for his wife, and

took one close beside her so that he could put one of his big brown hands on her small white ones as he talked. "You see, my dear, we have always looked upon Morton as the one to come after me here when I am gone, and now from what this gentleman tells me—and I see no reason to doubt his statements—that can never be. It is a shock, my dear, for both of us, and for poor Morton. How shall I tell him?"

"Tell him what, my dear? Nay, Mr. Hinckes will tell me—what is it that has happened, Mr. Hinckes?"

"Well, you see, my lady, we have got what you call 'the rightful heir' over yonder, my own nephew and Sir John's here."

"It's just this, my love," put in Sir John, who had recovered his composure. "My poor brother Robert, our scapegrace, you know, whom we all believed to have been lost on his way to America years ago, was not lost at all, it seems, but saved to live for many years. He has only lately died, in fact."

"April the 13th, at twenty minutes after nine p.m.," said Mr. Hinckes.

"He had married Mr. Hinckes's sister, who died——"

"September the 4th, 1877," again interrupted Mr. Hinckes.

"And leaves behind a son, my nephew, and consequently my heir; Robert, as you know, coming before Morton's father."

Lady Temple's tears were falling fast.

"Poor Morton! it is hard—cruelly hard. He has so loved the place! There is not a tree—nay, not a blade of grass that is not dear to him!"

"It is, it is; Heaven knows I feel it. Well, well, we can only do our best for him under the changed circumstances, and try," said Sir John with a gulp, "to love my nephew—my heir."

Mr. Hinckes rose.

"Waal now, Sir John, I'll leave you and your lady to talk it over. There's the bag with the documents, etc. You jest look 'em over before I come agen to-morrow. I'm sorry for you, Sir John Temple. You, too, my lady; also for the young man. 'Tain't pleasant to think a place like this is a-goin' to be yours, and then all of a sudden find it's a-goin' to be somebody else's. It chaws a man up naterally. I'm mortal sorry, but right's right, as I know you feel yourself, Sir John;" and Mr. Hinckes held out his hand in farewell.

"You will take some dinner, Mr. Hinckes?"

"No, I thank you, ma'am; the Temple Arms, where I am at present located, is more in my way than Temple Court, so, eff yew'll excuse me, I'll say adoo."

Long after Mr. Hinckes had taken his departure, Sir John and Lady Temple sat hand in hand in the little room silent and sorrowful.

The dressing and dinner gongs sounded, but they did not stir.

A little note was sent into the drawing-room to one of Lady Temple's matron guests, who forthwith ordered dinner to be served. In the dining-room at first a strange silence reigned. All knew something had happened, but what?

Morton Temple filled his uncle's place at the foot of the long table. One of the elder ladies, the same who had received the note, faced him from Lady Temple's seat.

Bowers assisted with the face of a sphinx. He, of course, knew nothing, but his whole air and bearing conveyed the belief that he knew all.

After dinner, which became a little brighter as it proceeded, Morton Temple was summoned to Sir John's room, and the other guests saw no more of him for the evening. Naturally these others were all excitement. They scattered themselves on the terraces, they strolled down by the river—their talk, of course, the mystery of the evening. The "faithful James" was the only one who really did not care in the least what it was all about—what had happened, or what was going to happen. And yet if he had only known, there was no one whom it more concerned. He had got his Julia to himself, and he was content.

His Julia was more than gracious. Her keen wit had divined a something very near—she knew not how near—the truth.

"Sir Roger has come home," she said to Mary Holme, "and Sir John must turn out."

"Poor Sir John! how can you even imagine anything so terrible?"

"You will see I am right, and, Mary."

"Yes," said Mary.

"Morton Temple will be a poor nobody all his life."

"What then?" said Mary fiercely.

"Why then, my dear, in that case I shall ignore the cheese, and reconcile myself to the mouse-traps."

That night, before she slept, Mary Holme knew all. Lady Temple came to her room and the two talked until daybreak.

The next morning after Mr. Hinckes's promised visit the whole house knew who he was and what he wanted.

Nothing could be considered final until Sir John's return from America, but as the dismayed baronet told his guests, he saw no reason to suspect the truth of Mr. Hinckes's statements.

Morton Temple looked crushed and worn, and it seemed about the best thing that could happen to him that he should get leave from his office and accompany his uncle.

Mary Holme was to remain with Lady Temple during their absence. Her poor little ladyship was heart-broken. There would be no more need to plot and plan. Poor Morton Temple was safe from the wiles of Julia Slingsby for ever.

The fair Julia, attended by the "faithful James," left for London before the day was over, and by the evening of the next day the great house was empty of its guests.

But Morton Temple had a few last words with Sir John's ward before her somewhat hurried departure. He knew where she was likely to be found, and made his way to the hot-houses and conservatories beyond the flower-garden.

As he entered the orchid-house, Julia, who having seen Ross, the head-gardener, safely out of the way, was laying a devastating hand on all around, turned her head with a start.

"Ah, you thought it was the retributive Ross," said Morton, advancing.

"I may have some!" said Julia in a tone of innocent enquiry.

"Oh, they are none of mine, and never will be," Morton answered a little bitterly. "But I need not tell you that. You know that I am ousted, a mere nobody—eh, Miss Slingsby?"

"I know that you are possibly no longer heir to Temple Court," said Julia, still calmly snipping.

"And have you nothing to say to me, no word of sympathy or encouragement in my changed prospects?"

Poor Morton! he felt that a word of kindness from this cold calm beauty would have reconciled him to it all.

"Of course I am sorry, if that is what you mean. I should be sorry enough if it was myself, I know."

"You couldn't live then without wealth and position?"

"I wouldn't try to."

"But if it was the man you loved who had lost it all?"

"Love is so intangible," laughed Julia. "I don't believe in it; do you?"

"No," said Morton; "for the future I intend only to believe in rank and riches—and heartlessness."

"And very wise of you too."

Poor Morton! he could not cast out all faith in the woman who had enslaved him even now. He came nearer to where she stood and looked at the dark handsome face with wistful eyes.

"I shall not be such a very poor man, Julia, and I can work harder and save."

"Look, there is Mary," said Julia, moving from his side.

And Mary entered with kind pitying eyes, for she had seen enough, and a message to Morton from my lady.

Some six years have passed since that eventful afternoon when Mr. Hinckes and his "pork-mankel" made their appearance at Temple Court. The dried-up little man proved to be no adventurer. Sir John and Morton Temple returned with him to America, and found all as he had stated. The old baronet came home, sad but resigned, bringing his young nephew with him. But the lad's visit was only a short one. He never took kindly to his new home or his new relatives. Sir John at once settled on him a generous allowance, and continues it still. But the young man is following in his father's footsteps. He is a spendthrift and a scapegrace, added to which he has his mother's disease—consumption—and, I believe, has no more chance of living to be owner of Temple Court than you or I; nor, as he has, happily, an invincible horror of matrimony, is he likely to have an heir who can ever reign there.

Morton Temple and Mary Holme have been man and wife now for the last four years. They have a charming little villa on the banks of the Thames, but are oftener at Temple Court, where a sturdy three-year-old, known as Jack, and a little roly-poly Molly, a year his junior, contrive to keep the old place alive. Not but that Sir John and my lady have plenty of life in them yet, and can indulge in a baby-romp with the best.

Julia Slingsby has been Julia Treton for longer still. Once having decided upon her line of action, she did not leave the faithful James to pine. They inhabit the big barrack, and though they have no

children, contrive to keep it pretty full with guests, and if wife and home are not quite all that James Treton looked for, he wisely keeps it to himself.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

VI.

WHEN the band-van, which is called in the Highlands a coach, had started on its way to the Trossachs, there began a driving shower that hid the hills from sight, and set everybody waterproof-donning and umbrella-hoisting; that is to say, one-half of the coach set up their gingham-tents, while the other half silently or loudly execrated these selfish and inhuman contrivances. Naturally the umbrella-holders are mostly women, and reckless of consequences, as women usually are, distilling streams of rain-water on their fellow-travellers—one stream down your neck, another into your boots, while a dozen different runlets from undiscovered sources are making up a general soak. Happily the shower is over in a minute. The sun is shining once more—Nature rejoices, and humanity also—holding out the soaked umbrellas to drip harmlessly upon the cool glistening roads, while a soft vapour rises from the wet fields, from the wet umbrellas, and the horses' steaming flanks. We are soon among the hills; first grassy knolls, where the dun cattle are gathered in groups, their wild heads and branching horns showing finely against the sky; and then bare and gloomy crags, with savage-looking lochs stretching before us, and the bold cliffs of huge Benvenue.

"Yon's Sawmson's putten-stone," says the scarlet-coated driver, pointing with his whip to a big boulder on the hill-side. "His pudden!" cries his neighbour, a fat and merry dame from the land of Cocagne. "Did he boil his pudden till it was that hard?" "I'm no saying a pooden, but a putten-stone. Maybe ye never heerd of the game the lads play ca'd putten the stone!" says the driver with a compassionate air of superior knowledge. "Aye, they say that Sawmson threw yon stone from the top o' yonder hill; but I verra' much doot if ever Sawmson were here." It is a wild and desolate region where anything might have happened in days gone by—a fit play-ground for giants and cunning dwarfs. In the mossy peaty pastures by the level of the lake roam herds of half-wild cattle, and a band of Highland caterans driving home

the cattle they have lifted, would be appropriate figures in the scene. Instead, we have a band of English women equipped with bags and umbrellas marching undauntedly through the waste, heedless of moss, morass, or treacherous watercourse.

"But yonder," cries the coachman, pointing again with his whip, this time towards the lower ground where the river flows from the lake with signs of Glasgow water-work-arrangement close by — "yonder's where Rhoderick Dhu fit the Sawxon." No scepticism in his tones now; he evidently believes in Roderick much more than in Samson. "Then that's Coillangleford, I guess?" ejaculates a young woman in the back seats. "Indeed it is, miss," replies the driver, and adds in a whisper: "Those American young leddies know more about the country than we do."

Somewhere about here is a point of the road where the horses run into the bank, and stop suddenly, quite of their own notion. The driver interprets this action by looking over his shoulder. "Perhaps the gentlemen would like to walk up the hill?"

For my own part I prefer to walk down the hills and be pulled up them, but I fancy the horses would jib if one declined to alight, and I know that Jennie would gibe at me. So away we go in straggling procession after the car like a Welsh funeral. "We'll get sweltering hot before we top the hill," sighs Uncle Jock, "and then we'll get a rattling shower to cool us." But the rain keeps off, and from the top of the hill the horses fly along as if they smelt their stables, and presently the coachman points again with his whip to where the hills close in upon a tumbled scene of wood and rock: "Yonder's the Trossachs."

"Where the rude Trossachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle."

That American young woman, as yet only a voice to us, is always ready with an appropriate bit of Scott. And now from a chill and barren region we plunge into a pass full of grateful shadows, among pleasant birken groves, the birch here attaining a size and luxuriance of foliage quite remarkable. And with the light graceful forms of the birks and the soft pleasing shadows they cast, with the deeper green and softer gloom of the mountain-ash, while oak and hazel veil the harsher forms of the rocks, with the dash and murmur of waters, the half-revealed recesses of ravine and mountain gorge; with all these charms, heightened

as they are by reputation and indefinite expectation of something more charming still, it is impossible to make light of the Trossachs, although one feels that in one way or another this charming pass has been made the most of.

"But when the bridge of Turk was won," our American young lady is again busy with her Scott. The steep and narrow bridge, with the torrent below, brown and foam-white in its setting of luxuriant verdure, and the cool delicate shade that pervaded the whole scene—yes, at the bridge of Turk there was a general consciousness of satisfaction.

And then, just when the pass seems to come to an inevitable finish, the rocks meeting and barring the passage so that you would think hardly even a goat could scramble any further—at this particular point appears the funnel of a steamer, and there opens out a sort of natural dock—a creek of clear crystal water, with a little steamer floating therein, and half-a-dozen boats, like a mother duck and her brood on some mountain burn. And jutting out over the water a pretty rustic pier, an harbour-like corridor, thatched with heather.

"A rural portico was seen
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
And withered heath and rushes dry,
Supplied a russet canopy."

Again our American chorus, now fairly to be recognised as an elegant but rather emaciated young woman, with her father, who is also tall, and lean, and fallow. Then she marched up to the extreme bows of the boat, and gazed abstractedly forth. "I guess that's the silver sand where Ellen paddled in her canoe," she said to her father, who shook his head knowingly as if he felt that it must be so.

But hardly are we fairly afloat when a drenching shower comes down, and distant objects disappear, the lake frothing up to meet the shower, and the blurred outlines of promontory, creek, and bay are hardly to be distinguished.

"How thankful we ought to be," cried Mrs. Gillies, "that it did not come on like this when we were on the coach." "There's time enough for that," grumbled Uncle Jock; "we'll have it on the coach as well presently."

And so the deck is almost clear of passengers, who are sheltering in the cabin, but Mary Grant is still braving the storm, with her brother, and the fair American, who is straining her eyes to search out Ellen's Isle. Young Archie pretends to know all about it, and so ingratiates him-

self with the American girl, who is still more interested in him when she finds that he is a real Highlander, and entitled to have his say about the country. "But I guess you don't wear your native garb ever, say?" she sweetly asks. "Oh yes, I do," says Grant, "when I'm on my native heather, but not in general society."

Presently the rain ceases, and a glimmer of soft light steals across, and then woods and hills seem to shake themselves free of the downpour and shyly reveal themselves, while

Katrine in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true.

Perhaps the great charm of Loch Katrine is the deep beautiful blue of her waters. Then there is the seclusion of the lake, the perpetual calm that rests upon it, broken only by the fussy noisy steamer, and the never-ending file of tourists. And except for these, never was the solitude so intense as to-day. Fitzjames might sound his bugle-horn, but would only hear the echo for his pains. Clan Alpin's warriors, where are they? The fiery cross would find no clansman to carry it. Clan Alpin, indeed, owes its existence to the imagination of Scott, but if there is any vraisemblance in his picture of those times, when

Each valley, each sequestered glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,

there has surely been a great progress towards depopulation since then.

Towards the head of the lake the hills assume a wilder and more savage aspect, with torrents foaming down their sides, a fine chocolate-cream colour from the effect of the downpour we have just undergone; and there, in a sheltered nook, is the inevitable hotel, its little knot of loiterers in the porch, its waiters on the look-out for fresh arrivals, while the departing guests are gathered about their piles of baggage.

At the hotel other coaches of the music-van order are waiting for us, and there is a general scramble for seats, with the happy result of a fresh shuffle of the whole pack of tourists. This time I find myself next to Mary Grant and her brother. Our coachmen are ominously shrouded in long waterproofs, for a fresh downpour seems imminent. If only the seats could be arranged so that passengers might creep under them during heavy showers! Presently down comes the rain, and up go the umbrellas. Happy the man who sits by Mary Grant, who does not carry an umbrella and who wears a tweed-covered hat that defies the weather. Her eager eyes scan and question all that the world about her

has to show—the two grave dominies opposite, who may be put down as professors of theology; the wild and rugged scenery, the roadside beauty of heather just starting into bloom, and innumerable wildflowers that are making the most of the short Highland summer; the lambs that skip on the hillside, the ruined shealing up the glen. "I am only to have two days of it, you know," she says half-apologetically for her eager enjoyment of it all; "two days' holiday from the Glasgow chimneys."

Hereabouts they say is Rob Roy's cottage, and any of these melancholy-looking skeletons of stone huts may stand for the one in question. A wedded pair sit next the dominies, and Jack is just as anxious to see and make out everything despite the rain and his wife's umbrella, as she is careless and indifferent. If only he would not scold she would be completely satisfied to sit with her eyes fixed upon nothing particular, and let even that glide by unnoticed. Jack reads from the guide-book: "'On the left, at the foot of a rugged hill'—only there are so many rugged hills, each of which boasts one foot at all events, if not more!—'is the cottage of Helen Macgregor, the wife of Rob Roy.' There look, Jane, but don't hold your umbrella so that all the wet runs into that gentleman's ear. Look about you, Jane; all this is history."

The shower flies off as we reach the top of the hill, and the horses are springing along the plateau that divides the slopes of Katrine from those of Lomond. And now the scenery is really grand, a hollow enclosed by huge mountains, a sharp flying shower like a veil between us and the sunshine on a distant glen. As the road descends it becomes steep as the roof of a house, and as we are pulled up to screw on the hind break, a gentle shiver runs through the passengers. We are descending to Inversnaid, to the original country of Rob Roy, and Loch Lomond is below shining like a jewel among the dark mountains, and if anything should give way, as we round one of those sharp corners, we might bump from crag to crag and presently splash into the lake below. But nothing does give way, and we presently arrive safely on a level platform above the lake, where there is another hotel, more waiters looking out for arriving guests, with an inviting-looking luncheon ready spread for their entertainment.

Just above is a pretty waterfall, with a pleasant winding path leading up, and a

rustic bridge over the torrent, and all well-shaded by trees, with ferns and wildflowers flourishing luxuriantly in every nook. There is nearly an hour to wait for the steamer, which is coming down from the head of the loch, for Inversnaid stands some way down towards the outlet. And Uncle Jock is disturbed in his mind as to the arrangements for our mid-day meal, whether to take it now at the inn or to wait until we get on board the steamer. The latter course perhaps is the pleasanter, but then shall we not miss a lot of the scenery? "I will look out for you, uncle, and tell you all about it, for I don't want to miss the least little bit, and I can eat when I get back to Glasgow," says Mary Grant with a sigh over the getting back. Uncle Jock contemplates the young woman with affectionate eyes. He has certainly travelled with much more enjoyment since Mary Grant has been of the party. Jennie is very nice, but then she is a good deal engrossed by herself and her own feelings, while Mary is always at hand when anybody wants anything, finds out all the places for Uncle Jock, and quite coaches him up in the necessary emotions. Now as far as his little scheme is concerned, it is not likely to come to anything. Jennie and Archie Grant have been very friendly, but that is all, and the young man is evidently more taken by the animated American girl, who is all soul and spirit, than by his cousin, who is perhaps of a type more familiar to him.

"I'm thinking, lassie," says Uncle Jock, after a pause of meditation, "I'd like to take you with us to the Heelands. The real Heeland Heelands, I mean. As for these bit slops of fresh-water lakes, they're well eneff." "They are real fine," cried Mary enthusiastically, "only there are not enough of them. To think that to-night we will be sleeping among the chimneys!" "Aye, for to-night," replied Uncle Jock with emphasis; "but what do ye say to starting with us the morn, all among the lochs and islands, lassie—the land of Lorn and the blue hills of Ardnamurchan?" "Oh, that would be fine!" cried Mary, her eyes opening wide with pleasure. "But no," she continued, the light vanishing from her face; "I cannot be spared. Poor Archie wants me most." "That for poor Archie!" cried Uncle Jock, snapping his fingers, his purpose strengthened by difficulty. "Here, Archie lad; come down here."

We were standing by the margin of the

lake, below the pretty little pier, and the grassy knoll where ladies are sitting at work, with children at play about them, where boats are drawn up, and where the waterfall tumbles in—the spot where, perhaps, Wordsworth stood and which he thus described:

And these grey rocks, this household lawn,
These trees a veil just half withdrawn,
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake.

Not that the lake is altogether silent, but tumbles in tiny ripples at our feet with a pleasant whispering murmur among the stones; and there stretches Loch Lomond far into the hazy distance—a little severe, perhaps, and with no great warmth of colour or soft and winning graces, but fair and cold, and faithful to the stern mountain that owns her as lord, the rugged Ben whose bluff heights are shrouded now in mist.

"Come down here, Archie," shouts Uncle Jock to the young Scot, who is talking to his American fair one on the grassy knoll above-mentioned; and Archie descends a little reluctantly. "I'm going to take Mary away from you for a fortnight or so," says Jock, taking him by the arm, and the graceless youth is positively pleased at the prospect. "You see," explains the youth, "it happens rather luckily, for I have half promised the Vanderpumps"—these are his new American friends, no doubt—"to take them round Melrose and Walter Scott's country." I rather demur to the expression. All Scotland is Walter Scott's country, and as for Abbotsford—but then, I am not going to Abbotsford. And poor Mary, although vastly pleased to have her liberty, is, perhaps, a little vexed that it is granted so readily. There is always something bitter in the cup, and so it is with the rest of the party. Jennie and she have shared the same room; they kiss and twine arms about each other, and Jennie professes to be delighted that she is to see so much more of her cousin, but still I detect upon her face, that I am accustomed to read pretty correctly, a certain tacit disapproval; and the placable Mrs. Gillies is not too well pleased, either. Evidently she does not care to share Uncle Jock with his sister's children.

But soon the steamer comes up and carries us all off, and Uncle Jock and I are presently congratulating ourselves on our self-denial in resisting the charms of the cold luncheon, for a very good dinner is served on board the steamer, and the

windows of the saloon command a full view of the lake and its scenery, and there is nothing pleasanter than eating in the middle of such surroundings. The others, who lunched at the hotel, regard us with some contempt when we make our appearance on deck. We have missed such a glen and such a pass, but what care we? We are prepared to enjoy what is left of the scenery with a calm and benignant satisfaction; and we smoke our pipes with the relish of those who are beyond the storms of fate for the rest of the day.

And there is Tarbert Point, with quite a row of coaches ready to take people to Loch Long and Loch Fyne; and quite a crowd of people on the pier, some coming with us, others only come to have a look at us—people who have the air of being settled in the place, and rather scornful of mere tourists. And then we cross over to another pier, where there is an artist sitting under a white umbrella, at which Jennie gives a start; but it is not Ronald, poor fellow! but an elderly man with a great spread of canvas, who is working away at Ben Lomond—Ben, who sits there with his head in the mist, as if too shy or too sulky to want his portrait taken. All is breezy and fresh, with pleasant islands dotting the lake, and in the steamer's wake a constant flight of sea-birds on the eager watch for anything that may be flung overboard. These birds follow the steamers up and down the lake, and seem to have quite lost their wild free manners and to have settled down as regular loafers and hangers-on of the tourist tribes. They are mostly small black-headed gulls, but a few of the big grey gulls are among them, and these dart and dive for all the scraps that are thrown out with much smaller success than their sharper and less dignified companions.

Soon there are signs that we are getting towards the end of the voyage. Tickets are collected, and people begin to look up their baggage, and exchange their easy-going head-dresses for more conventional shapes. The scenery, too, has grown tame, and the foot of the loch, though rich and fertile-looking, has nothing very interesting about it. And we are soon disembarked and scattered in a long train of nearly empty carriages—a train whose length and get-up reminds us that we are approaching the busy haunts of men. And so, with glimpses of the Clyde here and there, seen brimming full from the level of green fields, with ocean steamers and tall-masted ships curiously mixed up with trees

and pastures, the sky presently darkens and the roadside stations become crowded, while the train fills up with work-people and commercial travellers, and there is a whirl of canals, girders, masts, funnels, and innumerable chimneys. We glide into the terminus, and are thrown upon the hospitality of the good city of Saint Mungo.

The Gillies are going to stay with Archie Grant for this one night in Glasgow, and the young Scot hospitably extends his invitation to me. But I prefer the freedom of an hotel; and, indeed, an occasional parting keeps people from getting tired of each other. Pleasant, too, it is to get rid of your identity in the crowd of a big city, and it will be like making a fresh start, and a very pleasant one, from all this traffic and turmoil—to leave it all behind and seek the Hebridean Isles. And one recognises with a quite pleased thankfulness that there is nothing particular to see at Glasgow—nothing that one can see in a single night, that is—and that after a hasty glance at the cathedral it will be permitted to sleep the sleep that will know a very early waking.

In cities generally, the cathedral is the central point in the middle of all the life and activity of the place, but this is not the case with Glasgow. The city has slipped away from the cathedral, which stands in a forlorn and neglected part, bare and desolate in its surroundings, but showing a grim kind of grandeur, with its severe outlines and fine central tower and spire. About it is a vast graveyard, in the south-west corner of which is the public entrance, among some quaint seventeenth-century tombs, with a lodge, about the doorway of which sundry beadles in laced hats and uniforms are standing. There is a two-penny fee to pay here, and the beadle who takes the money reminds me that time is short, as the cathedral closes at six, and it is already close upon that hour. Outside, the evening is rather dull and gloomy, but within, the clerestory windows are glowing in a solemn kind of glory, and column, arch, and shaft are lit up with a warm mellow radiance. There is a simple grandeur about the place which is highly impressive; and presently I find my way down to the crypt, one of the finest extant, sombre and full of gloom, the dying light of day hardly penetrating as I thread my way cautiously among the massive piers, conscious of tombs and monuments all about, that mark the dust of almost forgotten generations. Here are steps that can only be felt for,

and I grope about in momentary dread of a tumble. Fancy pictures the result of such a fall, out of the reach of help, a long night of pain, perhaps, among the tombs. Even now I think I hear the massive gates of the crypt clang to. But no, I am in time, the golden-banded beadle is waiting in the upper world, waiting to lock up and leave the old pile to the seclusion of night.

It is pleasant to get into the living world again, and the busy streets—streets now crowded with a rough and ready throng, oil-scented from the factory, or with the brawny arms of ironworkers, uncouth, unempt, but not uncivil. And so wandering among the crowds to the Broomielaw, the public quay, where the red funnels of steamers are clustered; not handsome by any means, but business-like, with odd nondescript shops fronting the river, liquor-shops, money-changers', outfitters', and such as are likely to strike the fancy and suit the needs of migrants, outwards and inwards, and wild Irish, quarrelsome and abusive with each other, but tolerably submissive to the all strong-armed policeman, whose manners are not too mild even for the company he is among. But from the bridge a fine view down the long vista of ships and steamers, with a fine dying light in the west, a glowing haze that we may fancy envelopes the portals of the promised land beyond.

There is something about the hotel tonight that seems to say that the denizens of the promised land have come to our house on a return visit. There are chairs in the outside portico, and long legs stretched out in various directions, to say nothing of boots of strange and wonderful make. And entering the smoke-room behold a row of rocking-chairs—smoke-room evidently prepared for promised land—a row of restlessly-swinging chairs festooned with limp and fallow men of rather a gipsy cast—gipsy with a difference, that is; if Meg Merrilies had mated in her youth with Dominie Sampson, the progeny resulting from the union might have resembled our friends from the promised land. The leading spirit of the party is pretty clearly a deacon. His appearance, his name—Ephraim—all go with that, but his brother, with a different arrangement of hair and beard, might very well pass for some desperado of the bowie and revolver class. Not that he is anything of the kind. They are all honourable men, engaged in lawful traffic—ready to trade, to swap, to buy or to sell—their brains well furnished with notions, and their pockets well lined with

dollars. There is something in the cattle line going on here shortly, and they are gathered like eagles to the prey—some just landed from the States, others who have been running round Europe, with an eye upon horseflesh, and any other flesh out of which money can be made.

Enters one from Switzerland who is received with curt clicks of the eye and jerks of the head, and who, throwing himself into a vacant rocker, enquires laconically of the last from "out to home."

"How's hogs?"

"Seven 'alf booming up'ards," is the equally laconic reply, while "All'us booming" is the general chorus. And satisfied on this point young Switzer gives his opinion freely on men and manners in northern Europe. He does not hold Germany in much account. "They've hardly a proper hog among them. And then the people are so boastful." They were telling him tales of how many thousand hogs a year were killed in Germany. "Why," said I, "we kill as many hogs a day in Chicago as you have in all Germany." At this, a general verdict of approval, and another traveller gives corroborative evidence of the boastful nature of Germans.

"They talk to me about a man, one of their princes, I guess, who grew his twenty thousand acres of corn. 'Why,' says I, 'I know a man, who ain't of much account among us, with his sixty thousand acres of corn, all inside one fence.' So they've no great account to brag, I guess."

Another general chorus of complete assent. And then the deacon, for the benefit of a few benighted Britishers who are present, gives us a few statistics as to hog-killing enterprise in Chicago, and illustrates the five cuts that kill, disembowel, and dismember a hog in the space of thirty seconds, while next instant a successor is presented to the gory knife.

"Oh, it's a beautiful sight," cries Ephraim enthusiastically; "there's nothing in the old country can come nigh it." An assertion backed up by the general chorus. And not in hogs alone, but horses too, and buggies, is the hopeless inferiority of the old country made manifest. But the deacon is a fair-dealing man. He allows that the Britishers can beat them on one point. "You beat us in berries." With a deprecatory wave of the hand towards his followers, who give a grudging assent. "Yes, in gooseberries; likewise in strawberries."

And so, with patriotic feelings a little

soothed, to bed, with the warning notice ever present to the mind, even in the hours of sleep : The Columba sails at seven a.m. for Oban and the Western Highlands.

THAT VETERAN.

"SERVED, sir? Yes, sir," said my tattered vis-à-vis, drawing himself up and touching his apology for a hat. "Crimea and Mutiny, sir."

"What arm?" I asked lazily.

"Royal Horse Artillery. Thank you, sir, I take it hot with sugar."

It was pleasant to meet anyone who could talk English among those barren Welsh mountains, and pleasanter still to find one who had anything to talk about. I had been toiling along for the last ten miles, vowing in my heart never to take a solitary walking-tour again, and above all never, under any circumstances, to cross the borders of the principality. My opinions of the original Celt, his manners, customs, and above all his language, were very much too forcible to be expressed in decent society. The ruling passion of my life seemed to have become a deep and all-absorbing hatred towards Jones, Davis, Morris, and every other branch of the great Cymric trunk. Now, however, sitting at my ease in the little inn at Langerod, with a tumbler of smoking punch at my elbow, and my pipe between my teeth, I was inclined to take a more rosy view of men and things. Perhaps it was this spirit of reconciliation which induced me to address the weather-beaten scarecrow in front of me, or perhaps it was that his resolute face and lean muscular figure attracted my curiosity.

"You don't seem much the better for it," I remarked.

"It's this, sir, it's this," he answered, touching his glass with the spoon. "I'd have had my seven shillings a day, as retired sergeant-major, if it wasn't for this. One after another I've forfeited them—my badges and my good service allowance and my pension, until they had nothing more to take from me, and turned me adrift into the world at forty-nine. I was wounded once in the trenches and once at Delhi, and this is what I got for it, just because I couldn't keep away from the drink. You don't happen to have a fill of 'baccy about you? Thank you, sir; you are the first gentleman I have met this many a day.

"Sebastopol? Why, Lord bless you, I

knows it as well as I know this here village. You've read about it, may be, but I could make it clear to you in a brace of shakes. This here fender is the French attack, you see, and this poker is the Russian lines. Here's the Mamelon opposite the French, and the Redan opposite the English. This spittoon stands for the harbour of Balaclava. There's the quarries midway between the Russians and us, and here's Cathcart's hill, and this is the twenty-four gun battery. That's the one I served in towards the end of the war. You see it all now, don't you, sir?"

"More or less," I answered doubtfully.

"The enemy held those quarries at the commencement, and very strong they made them with trenches and rifle-pits all round. It was a terrible thorn in our side, for you couldn't show your nose in our advanced works, but a bullet from the quarries would be through it. So at last the general, he would stand it no longer, so we dug a covering trench until we were within a hundred yards of them, and then waited for a dark night. We got our chance at last, and five hundred men were got together quietly under cover. When the word was given they made for the quarries as hard as they could run, jumped down, and began bayonetting every man they met. There was never a shot fired on our side, sir, but it was all done as quiet as may be. The Russians stood like men—they never failed to do that—and there was a rare bit of give-an'-take fighting before we cleared them out. Up to the end they never turned, and our fellows had to pitchfork them out of the place like so many trusses of hay. That was the Thirtieth that was engaged that night. There was a young lieutenant in that corps, I disremember his name, but he was a terrible one for a fight. He wasn't more'n nineteen, but as tall as you, sir, and a deal stouter. They say that he never drew his sword during the whole war, but he used an ash stick, supple and strong, with a knob the size of a cocoa-nut at the end of it. It was a nasty weapon in hands like his. If a man came at him with a firelock, he could down him before the bayonet was near him, for he was long in the arm and active as well. I've heard from men in his company that he laid about him like a demon in the quarries that night, and crippled twenty, if he hit one."

It seemed to me that the veteran was beginning to warm to his subject, partly, perhaps, from the effects of the brandy-and-water, and partly from having found a

sympathetic listener. One or two leading questions were all that he would require. I refilled my pipe, settled myself down in my chair, put my weary feet upon the fender, and prepared to listen.

"They were splendid soldiers, the Russians, and no man that ever fought against them would deny it. It was queer what a fancy they had for the English, and we for them. Our fellows that were taken by them were uncommon well used, and when there was an armistice we could get on well together. All they wanted was dash. Where they were put they would stick, and they could shoot right well, but they didn't seem to have it in them to make a rush, and that was where we had them. They could drive the French before them, though, when we were not by. I've seen them come out for a sortie, and kill them like flies. They were terribly bad soldiers—the worst I ever saw—all except the Zouaves, who were a different race to the rest. They were all great thieves and rogues, too, and you were never safe if you were near them."

"You don't mean to say they would harm their own allies?" said I.

"They would that, sir, if there was anything to be got by it. Look at what happened to poor Bill Cameron, of our battery. He got a letter that his wife was ailing, and as he wasn't very strong himself, they gave him leave to go back to England. He drew his twenty-eight pound pay, and was to sail in a transport next day; but, as luck would have it, he goes over to the French canteen that night, just to have a last wet, and he lets out there that he had the money about him. We found him next morning lying as dead as mutton between the lines, and so kicked and bruised that you could hardly tell he was a human being. There was many an Englishman murdered that winter, sir, and many a Frenchman who had a good British pea-jacket to keep out the cold.

"I'll tell you a story about that, if I am not wearying you. Thank you, sir; I thought I'd just make sure. Well, four of our fellows—Sam Kelcey and myself, and Jack Burns and Prout—were over in the French lines on a bit of a spree. When we were coming back, this chap Prout suddenly gets an idea. He was an Irishman, and uncommon clever.

"'See here, boys,' says he; 'if you can raise sixpence among you, I'll put you in the way of making some money to-night, and a bit of fun into the bargain.'

"Well, we all agreed to this, and turned out our pockets, but we only had about fourpence altogether.

"'Niver mind,' says Prout. 'Come on with me to the French canteen. All you've to do is to seem very dhrunk, and to keep saying "yes" to all I ask.'

"All this time, sir, we hadn't a ghost of an idea of what he was driving at, but we went stumbling and rolling into the canteen, among a crowd of loafing Frenchmen, and spent our coppers in a drain of liquor.

"'Now,' says Prout, loud out, so as everyone could hear, 'are you ready to come back to camp?'

"'Yes,' says we.

"'Have you got your thirty pounds safe in your pocket, Sam?'

"'Yes,' says Sam.

"'And you, Bill,' he says to me, 'have you got your three months' pay all right?'

"'Yes,' I answers.

"'Well, come on, then, an' don't tumble down more'n you can help;' and with that we staggers out of the canteen and away off into the darkness.

"By this time we had a pretty good suspicion of what he was after, but when we were well out of sight of everybody, he halted and explained to us.

"'They're bound to follow us after what we've said, and it's queer if the four of us can't manage to best them. They keep their money in little bags round their necks, and all you've got to do is to cut the string.'

"Well, we stumbled on, still pretending to be very drunk, so as to have the advantage of a surprise, but never a soul did we see. At last we was within a stone's-throw of our lines when we heard a whispering of 'Anglais! Anglais!' which is their jargon for 'English,' sir; and there, sure enough, was about a dozen men coming down against us in the moonlight. We stumbled along, pretending to be too drunk even to see them. Pretty soon they stopped, and one of them, a big stout man, sidles up to Sam Kelcey and says, 'What time you call it?' while the rest of them began to draw round us. Sam says nothing, but gives a terrible lurch, on which the Frenchie, thinking it all right, sprang at his throat.

"That was our signal for action, and in we went. Sam Kelcey was the strongest man in the battery and a terrible braiser, and he caught this leader of theirs a clip under the jaw that sent him twice head over heels before he brought up against the wall, with the blood pouring from his

mouth. The others made a run at us, but all they could do was to kick and scream, while we kept knocking them down as quick as they could get to their feet. We had all their little bags, sir, and we left the lot of them stripped and senseless on the road. Five-and-thirty golden pieces in English money and French we counted out upon a knapsack when we got back to our quarters, besides boots and flannel shirts and other things that were handy. There was never another drunken man followed after that night's work, for you see they never could be sure that it wasn't a sham."

The veteran paused for a moment to have a pull at his glass and listen to my murmur of appreciation. I was afraid that I had exhausted his story-telling capacities; but he rippled on again between the puffs of his pipe.

"Sam Kelcey—him that I spoke about—was a fine man, but his brother Joe was a finer, though a bit of a scamp in his day, like many a fine man is. When I was stationed at Gibraltar after the war Joe Kelcey was working at the fortifications as a convict, having been sent out of England for some little game or other. He was known to be a bold and resolute man, and the overseers kept a sharp look-out on him for fear he'd try to break away. One day he was working on the banks of the river and he seed an empty hamper come floating down—one that had come with wine, as like as not, for the officers' mess. He gets hold of the hamper, and he knocks the bottom out, and stows it away among the rushes. Next morning we were having breakfast when in rushes one of the guard and cries, 'Come on, boys; the five-of-spades is up!'—the five-of-spades being a name they gave to the spotted signal they ran up when a convict had escaped. Out we all tumbled, and began searching like hounds for a hare, because there was always a reward of two pounds for the finder. There wasn't a drain or a hollow but was overhauled, and never a sign of Joe, till at last we gave him up in despair, and agreed that he must be at the bottom of the river.

"That afternoon I was on guard on the ramparts, and my eye chanced to light on an old hamper drifting about half a mile or so from the shore. I thought nothing of it at the time, but in a quarter of an hour I happened to catch sight of the same object again. I stared at it in astonishment.

"'Why,' I said to the sentry on the wall, 'that hamper's going further away

towards the Spanish shore. Blest if it isn't moving against wind and tide and every law of Nature.'

"'Nonsense!' says he; 'there's always a queer eddy in the straits.'

"Well, this didn't satisfy me at all, so I goes up to Captain Morgan, of our battery, who was smoking his cigar, and I saluted and told him about the hamper. Off he goes, and is back in a minute with a spy-glass, and takes a peep through it.

"'Bless my soul!' he cries, 'why the hamper's got arms sticking out of it! Ah, to be sure, it's that rascal who escaped this morning. Just run up a signal to the man-of-war.'

"We hoisted it, and in a few minutes two boats were in pursuit of the convict. Now if we had left well enough alone, Joe would have been caught sure enough, for he never knew he was found out, and was taking things leisurely, being an uncommon fine swimmer. But Captain Morgan says:

"'Just wheel round this thirty-two pounder, and we'll drop a shot beside him to show him that we see him, and bring him to a halt.'

"We slewed the gun round, sir, and the captain looked along the sights and touched her off. A more wonderful shot you never saw, and the whole crowd that was on the ramparts gave a regular shout. It hit the top of the hamper and sent the whole thing flying in the air, so that we made sure that the man was killed. When the foam from the splash had cleared away, he was still there though, and striking out might and main for the Spanish coast. It was a close race between him and the boats, and the coxswain actually grabbed at him with a boat-hook as he clambered up on land, but there he was, and we could see him dancing about and chaffing the men-o'-war's men. There was a cheer, sir, when we saw him safe, for a plucky chap like that deserves to be free, whatever he's been and done. You look tired. You've had a long walk maybe. Perhaps you'd best have some rest."

This remark, disinterested as it sounds, was given point to by the plaintive manner in which my companion gazed at the two empty glasses, as if it were evident that the proceedings of the evening had come to a close.

"It's not often," he murmured, "that a poor old soldier like me finds a gentleman as sociable-like and free as your honour."

I need hardly say that after that I had no alternative but to ring the bell and order up a second edition of the brandy-and-water.

"You were talking about the Russians," he continued, "and I told you they were fine soldiers. Some of their riflemen were as good shots as ever pulled a trigger. Excuse me, that glass is yours, sir, and the other is mine. Our sharpshooters used to arrange four sand-bags, one on each side, one in front, and one crossways on the top, so as to cover them all round. Then, you see, they shot through the little slit between the bag in front and the one on the top; maybe not more than two inches across. You'll hardly believe me, but I've seen at the distance of five hundred yards the bullets humming through the narrow slits as thick as bees. I've known as many as six men knocked over in half an hour in one of these sand-traps, as we used to call them; every one of them hit in the eye too, for that was the only part that showed.

"There is a story that that reminds me of which might interest you. There was one Russian fellow that had a sand-pit all of his own, right in front of our trenches. I never saw anybody so persevering as that man was. Early in the morning he'd be popping away, and there he'd stay until nightfall, taking his food with him into the pit. He seemed to take a real pleasure in it, and as he was a very fine shot, and never let us get much of a chance at him, he was not a popular character in the advanced trenches. Many a good fellow he sent to glory. It got such a nuisance that we dropped shells at him now and again, but he minded them no more than if they had been so many oranges.

"One day I was down in the trenches when Colonel Mancor, of the Forty-eighth, a splendid shot and a great man for sport, came along. A party with a sergeant were at work, and just as the colonel came up, one of them dropped with a ball through his head.

"'Deuced good shot! Who fired that?' says the colonel, putting up his eye-glass.

"'Man in the rifle-pit to the left, sir,' answers the sergeant."

"'Never saw a neater shot,' says the colonel. 'He only showed for a moment, and wouldn't have shown then, only that the edge of the trench is a bit worn away. Does he often shoot like that?'

"'Terribly dangerous man,' replies the sergeant; 'kills more than all the guns in the Redan.'

"'Now, major,' says the colonel, turning to another officer as was with him, 'what's the odds against my picking him off?'

"'In how long?'

"'Within ten minutes.'

"'Two to one, in ponies, I'll give you,' says the major.

"'Say three, and it's a bargain.'

"'Three to one in ponies,' answered the major, and the bet was made.

"He was a great man for measuring his powder, was the colonel, and always emptied out a cartridge and then filled it up again according to his taste. He took about half his time getting the sergeant's gun loaded to please him. At last he got it right, and the glass screwed well into his eye.

"'Now, my lads,' says he, 'just push poor Smith here up over the trench. He's dead enough, and another wound will make little difference to him.'

"The men began to hoist the body up, and the colonel stood, maybe twenty yards off, peering over the edge with eyes like a lynx. As soon as the top of Smith's shako appeared, we saw the barrel of the gun come slowly out of the sand-pit, and when his poor dead face looks over the edge, whizz comes a bullet right through his forehead. The Russian he peeps out of the pit to see the effect of his shot, and he never looks at anything again until he sees the everlasting river. The colonel fired with a sort of a chuckle, and the rifleman sprang up in the air, and ran a matter of ten or twelve paces towards us, and then down on his face as dead as a door-nail. 'Double or quits on the man in the pit to the right,' says the colonel, loading up his gun again, but I think the major had dropped money enough for one day over his shooting, for he wouldn't hear of another try. By the way, it was handed over to Smith's widow, for he was a free-handed gentleman, was the colonel, not unlike yourself, sir.

"That running of dead men is a queer thing. Perhaps your eddication may help you to understand it, but it beats me. I've seen it, though, many a time. I remember the doctor of our regiment saying it was commoner among men hit through the heart. What do you think about it, sir?"

"Your doctor was quite right," I answered. "In several murder cases people who have been stabbed or shot through the heart have gone surprising distances afterwards. I never heard of such a case occurring in a battle, but I don't see why it shouldn't."

"It happened once," resumed my companion, "when Codrington's division were

going up the Alma, and were close on the great redoubt. To their surprise a single Russian came running down the hill against them, with his firelock in his hand. One or two fired at him and seemed to miss him, for on he came till he got right up to the line, when a sergeant, as had seen a deal of service, gives a laugh, and throws his gun down in front of him. Down goes the Russian and lies there stone dead. He'd been shot through the heart at the top of the hill, and was dead before ever he began that charge. At least, that's what the sergeant said, and we all believed him.

"There was another queer incident of the same sort which happened later on in the war. Perhaps you may have heard of it, for it got into print at the time. One night a body, fearfully mangled and crushed, came crashing in among the tents of the light division. Nobody could make head or tail of it, until some deserters let it out long afterwards. It seems that they had one old-fashioned sort of gun with a big bore in a Russian battery. Now the night was cold, and the poor devil of a sentry thought he'd stow himself away where he'd never be seen, so he creeps inside the big gun, and goes to sleep there. In the middle of the night there was a sudden alarm of an attack, and an artilleryman runs up to the gun and touches it off, and the sentry was flying through the air at twenty miles a minute. It didn't much matter," added the veteran philosophically, "for he was bound to be shot any way, for sleeping at his post, so it saved a deal of useless delay."

"To a man who has seen so much of the world," I remarked, "this humdrum life in a Welsh village must be very slow."

"It is that, sir. It is that, sir. You've hit it there. Lord bless you, sir, if I had a gentleman like yourself to talk to every night I'd be a different man. I'll tell you one reason now for my coming to this place," here he leaned forward impressively. "I've got a wife in London, sir, but I came here to break myself of the drink. And I'm doing it, slow but sure. Why, three weeks ago I could never sleep unless I had my five glasses under my belt, and now I can manage it on three."

"Waiter, another glass of brandy-and-water," said I.

"Thank you, sir; thank you. As you said just now I have had a stirring life, and this quiet business is too much for me. Did I ever tell you how I got my

stripes? Why, it was by hanging three men—three men with these very hands."

"How was that?" I asked sleepily.

"It was like this, sir. We were in Corfu—three batteries of us, in '50. Well, one of our officers—a lieutenant he was—went off into the mountains to shoot one day, and he never came back. His dog trotted into the mess-room, however, and began to howl for all the world like a human being. A party was made up, and followed the dog, who led them right up among the hills to a place where there was a ditch. There, with a lot of ferns and such-like heaped over him, the poor young fellow was lying with his throat cut from ear to ear. He was a great favourite in the regiment, and more particularly with the officer in command, and he swore that he'd have revenge. There was a deal of discontent among the Greeks on the island at the time, and this had been encouraged by the priests—'pappas' they call them. Well, when we got back to town, the captain calls all these pappas before him, and there were three of them who could give no sort of account of themselves, but turned pale and stammered, and were terribly put out. A court-martial was held, and the three of them were condemned to be hanged. Now came the difficulty, however, for it was well known that if anyone laid hands on a priest his life wasn't worth an hour's purchase. They are very strict about that are the Greeks, and uncommon handy with their knives. The captain called for a volunteer, and out I stepped, for I thought it was my duty, sir, seeing that I had been the dead man's servant. Well, the troops formed square round the scaffold, and I hung them as high as Haman. When the job was over, the captain says, 'Now, my lad, I'll save your life,' and with that he forms the troops up into close order, puts me in the middle, and marches me down to the quay. There was a steamer there just casting off her warps for England, and I was shoved aboard, the crowd surging all round, and trying to get at me. You never heard such a howl as when they saw the ship steam out of the bay, and knew that I was gone. I have been a lonely man all my life, sir, and I may say that was the only time I have been honestly regretted when I left. We searched the ship when we got out to sea, and blessed if there weren't three Greek stowaways aboard, each with his knife in his belt. We hove them

over the side, and since I have never heard from them since, I fear they may possibly have been drowned ;" and the artilleryman grinned in high delight. "They made me a corporal for that job, sir."

"By the way, what is your name?" I asked, getting more and more drowsy, partly from the heat of the fire, and partly from a curious feeling which was stealing over me, and the like of which I had never experienced before.

"Sergeant Turnbull, sir; Turnbull of B battery, Royal Horse Artillery. Major Campbell, who was over us in the Crimea, or Captain Onslow, or any of the old corps, would be glad to hear that you have seen me. You'll not forget the name, will you, sir?"

I was too sleepy to answer.

"I could tell you a yarn about a Zouave that would amuse you. He was mortal drunk, and mistook the Russian lines for ours. They was having their supper in the Mamelon when he passes the sentry as cool as may be—prisoner—jumps—colonel—free——"

When I came to myself I found that I was lying in front of the smouldering fire, and that the candle was burning low. I was alone in the room. I staggered to my feet with a laugh, but my brain seemed to spin round, and I came down into my former position. Something was evidently amiss. I put my hand into my pocket to find out the time. It was empty. I gave a gasp of astonishment. My purse was gone too. I had been thoroughly rifled.

"Who's in there?" cried a voice, and a small dapper man, rather past the prime of life, came into the room with a candle. "Bless my soul, sir, my wife told me a traveller had come, but I thought you were in bed long ago. I'm the landlord, but I've been away all day at Llanmorris fair."

"I've been robbed," said I.

"Robbed!" cried the landlord, nearly dropping the candle in his consternation.

"Watch, money—everything gone," I said despondently. "What time is it?"

"Nearly one," said he. "Are you sure there is no mistake?"

"No, there's no mistake. I fell asleep about eleven, so he's got two hours' start."

"There was a train left about an hour and a half ago. He's clear away, whoever he is," observed the landlord. "You seem weak, sir. Ah!" he added, sniffing at my

glass; "landanum, I see. You've been drugged, sir."

"The villain!" I cried. "I know his name and history, that's one blessing."

"What was it?" asked the landlord eagerly.

"I'll make every police-station in the kingdom ring with it till I teach him. It is Sergeant Turnbull, formerly of B Battery."

"Why, bless my soul!" cried my companion. "Why, I am Sergeant Turnbull of B Battery, with medals for the Crimea and Mutiny, sir."

"Then who the deuce is he?"

A light seemed to break upon the landlord.

"Was he a tall man with a scar on his forehead?" he asked.

"That's him!" I cried.

"Then he's the greatest villain unhung. Sergeant, indeed! He never wore a uniform except a convict's in his life. That's Joe Kelcey."

"And do you mean to say he never was in the Crimea?"

"Not he, sir. He's never been out of England, except once to Gibraltar where he escaped very cleverly."

"He told me—he told me," I groaned; "and the officer with the stick, and the sporting colonel, and the running corpses, and the Greek priests—were they all liars?"

"All true as gospel, sir, but they happened to me, and not to him. He's heard me tell the stories many a time in the bar, so he reeled them off to you, so as to get a chance of hocussing the liquor. He's been reformed, and living here quiet enough, but being left alone with you, and seeing your watch, has been too much for him. Come up to bed, sir, and I'll send round and let the police know all about it."

And so, reader, I present you with a string of military anecdotes. I don't know how you will value them. They cost me a good watch and chain, and fourteen pounds, seven shillings and fourpence, and I thought them dear at the price.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE RUMOURS AS TO MR. PROSPER.

IT was still October when Harry Annesley went down to Buston, and the Mountjoys had just reached Brussels. Mr. Grey had made his visit to Tretton and had returned to London. Harry went home on an understanding—on the part of his mother at any rate—that he should remain there till Christmas. But he felt himself very averse to so long a sojourn. If the Hall and park were open to him he might endure it. He would take down two or three stiff books which he certainly would never read, and would shoot a few pheasants, and possibly ride one of his future brother-in-law's horses with the hounds. But he feared that there was to be a quarrel by which he would be debarred from the Hall and the park; and he knew too that it would not be well for him to shoot and hunt when his income should have been cut off. It would be necessary that some great step should be taken at once; but then it would be necessary also that Florence should agree to that step. He had a modest lodging in London, but before he started he prepared himself for what must occur by giving notice. "I don't say as yet that I shall give them up; but I might as well let you know that it's possible." This he said to Mrs. Brown who kept the lodgings, and who received this intimation as a Mrs. Brown is sure to do. But where should he betake himself when his home at Mrs. Brown's had been lost? He would, he thought, find it quite impossible to live in absolute idleness at the rectory. Then in an unhappy frame of mind he went down by the train to Stevenage,

and was there met by the rectory pony-carriage.

He saw it all in his mother's eye the moment she embraced him. There was some terrible trouble in the wind, and what could it be but his uncle? "Well, mother, what is it?"

"Oh, Harry, there is such a sad affair up at the Hall."

"Is my uncle dead?"

"Dead; no!"

"Then why do you look so sad?"

"Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless, so dull, so dead in look, so woe-begone, drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night."

"Oh, Harry, do not laugh. Your uncle says such dreadful things."

"I don't care much what he says. The question is—what does he mean to do?"

"He declares that he will cut you off altogether."

"That is sooner said than done."

"That is all very well, Harry; but he can do it. Oh, Harry! But come and sit down and talk to me. I told your father to be out, so that I might have you alone. And the dear girls are gone into Buntingford."

"Ah, like them. Thoroughbury will have enough of them."

"He is our only happiness now."

"Poor Thoroughbury! I pity him if he has to do happiness for the whole household."

"Joshua is a most excellent young man. Where we should be without him I do not know." The flourishing young brewer was named Joshua, and had been known to Harry for some years, though never as yet known as a brother-in-law.

"I am sure he is; particularly as he has chosen Molly to be his wife. He is just the young man who ought to have a wife."

"Of course he ought."

"Because he can keep a family. But now about my uncle. He is to perform this ceremony of cutting me off. Will he turn out to have had a wife and family in former ages? I have no doubt old Scarborough could manage it, but I don't give my uncle credit for so much cleverness."

"But in future ages," said the unhappy mother, shaking her head and rubbing her eyes.

"You mean that he is going to have a family?"

"It is all in the hands of Providence," said the parson's wife.

"Yes; that is true. He is not too old yet to be a second Priam, and have his curtains drawn the other way. That's his little game, is it?"

"There's a sort of rumour about, that it is possible."

"And who is the lady?"

"You may be sure there will be no lack of a lady if he sets his mind upon it. I was turning it over in my mind, and I thought of Matilda Thoroughbury."

"Joshua's aunt!"

"Well; she is Joshua's aunt, no doubt. I did just whisper the idea to Joshua, and he says that she is fool enough for anything. She has twenty-five thousand pounds of her own, but she lives all by herself."

"I know where she lives—just out of Buntingford, as you go to Royston. But she's not alone. Is Uncle Prosper to marry Miss Tickle also?" Miss Tickle was an estimable lady living as companion to Miss Thoroughbury.

"I don't know how they may manage; but it has to be thought of, Harry. We only know that your uncle has been twice to Buntingford."

"The lady is fifty, at any rate."

"The lady is barely forty. She gives out that she is thirty-six. And he could settle a jointure on her which would leave the property not worth having."

"What can I do?"

"Yes, indeed, my dear; what can you do?"

"Why is he going to upset all the arrangements of my life, and his life, after such a fashion as this?"

"That's just what your father says."

"I suppose he can do it. The law will allow him. But the injustice would be monstrous! I did not ask him to take me by the hand when I was a boy and lead me into this special walk of life. It has been his own doing. How will he look me

in the face and tell me that he is going to marry a wife? I shall look him in the face and tell him of my wife."

"But is that settled?"

"Yes, mother; it is settled. Wish me joy for having won the finest lady that ever walked the earth." His mother blessed him, but said nothing about the finest lady—who at that moment she believed to be the future bride of Mr. Joshua Thoroughbury. "And when I shall tell my uncle that it is so, what will he say to me? Will he have the face then to tell me that I am to be cut out of Buston? I doubt whether he will have the courage!"

"He has thought of that, Harry."

"How thought of it, mother?"

"He has given orders that he is not to see you."

"Not to see me!"

"So he declares. He has written a long letter to your father, in which he says that he would be spared the agony of an interview."

"What! is it all done then?"

"Your father got the letter yesterday. It must have taken my poor brother a week to write it."

"And he tells the whole plan; Matilda Thoroughbury, and the future family?"

"No; he does not say anything about Miss Thoroughbury. He says that he must make other arrangements about the property."

"He can't make other arrangements; that is, not until the boy is born. It may be a long time first, you know."

"But the jointure."

"What does Molly say about it?"

"Molly is mad about it, and so is Joshua. Joshua talks about it just as though he were one of us, and he says that the old people at Buntingford would not hear of it." The old people spoken of were the father and mother of Joshua, and the half-brother of Miss Matilda Thoroughbury.

"But what can they do?"

"They can do nothing. If Miss Matilda likes Uncle Prosper——"

"Likes, my dear! How young you are! Of course she would like a country house to live in, and the park, and the county society. And she would like somebody to live with besides Miss Tickle."

"My uncle, for instance."

"Yes, your uncle."

"If I had my choice, mother, I should prefer Miss Tickle."

"Because you are a silly boy. But what are you to do now?"

"In this long letter which he has written to my father, does he give no reason?"

"Your father will show you the letter. Of course he gives reasons. He says that you have done something which you ought not to have done—about that wretched Mountjoy Scarborough."

"What does he know about it—the idiot!"

"Oh, Harry!"

"Well, mother, what better can I say of him? He has taken me as a child and fashioned my life for me; has said that this property should be mine, and has put an income into my hand as though I were an eldest son; has repeatedly declared, when his voice was more potent than mine, that I should follow no profession. He has bound himself to me, telling all the world that I was his heir. And now he casts me out because he has heard some cock-and-bull story, of the truth of which he knows nothing. What better can I say of him than call him an idiot? He must be that or else a heartless knave. And he says that he does not mean to see me—me with whose life he has thus been empowered to interfere, so as to blast it if not to bless it, and intends to turn me adrift as he might do a dog that did not suit him! And because he knows that he cannot answer me, he declares that he will not see me."

"It is very hard, Harry."

"Therefore I call him an idiot in preference to calling him a knave. But I am not going to be dropped out of the running in that way, just in deference to his will. I shall see him. Unless they lock him up in his bedroom I shall compel him to see me!"

"What good would that do, Harry? That would only set him more against you."

"You don't know his weakness."

"Oh yes, I do; he is very weak."

"He will not see me, because he will have to yield when he hears what I have to say for myself. He knows that, and would therefore fain keep away from me. Why should he be stirred to this animosity against me?"

"Why indeed?"

"Because there is someone who wishes to injure me, more strong than he is, and who has got hold of him. Someone has lied behind my back."

"Who has done this?"

"Ah, that is the question. But I know who has done it, though I will not name

him just now. This enemy of mine, knowing him to be weak—knowing him to be an idiot, has got hold of him and persuaded him. He believes the story which is told to him, and then feels happy in shaking off an incubus. No doubt I have not been very soft with him—nor, indeed, hard. I have kept out of his way, and he is willing to resent it. But he is afraid to face me and tell me that it is so. Here are the girls come back from Buntingford. Molly, you blooming young bride, I wish you joy of your brewer."

"He's none the worse on that account, Master Harry," said the eldest sister.

"All the better—very much the better. Where would you be if he was not a brewer? But I congratulate you with all my heart, old girl. I have known him ever so long, and he's one of the best fellows I do know."

"Thank you, Harry," and she kissed him.

"I wish Fanny and Kate may even do so well."

"All in good time," said Fanny.

"I mean to have a banker—all to myself," said Kate.

"I wish you may have half as good a man for your husband," said Harry.

"And I am to tell you," continued Molly, who was now in high good-humour, "that there will be always one of his horses for you to ride as long as you remain at home. It is not every brother-in-law that would do as much as that for you."

"Nor yet every uncle," said Kate, shaking her head, from which Harry could see that this quarrel with his uncle had been freely discussed in the family circle.

"Uncles are very different," said the mother; "uncles can't be expected to do everything as though they were in love."

"Fancy Uncle Peter in love," said Kate. Mr. Prosper was called Uncle Peter by the girls, though always in a sort of joke. Then the other two girls shook their heads very gravely, from which Harry learned that the question respecting the choice of Miss Matilda Thoroughbury as a mistress for the Hall had been discussed also before them.

"I am not going to marry all the family," said Molly.

"Not Miss Matilda, for instance," said her brother, laughing.

"No, especially not Matilda. Joshua is quite as angry about his aunt as anybody here can be. You'll find that he is more of an Annesley than a Thoroughbury."

"My dear," said the mother, "your

husband will, as a matter of course, think most of his own family. And so ought you to do of his family, which will be yours. A married woman should always think most of her husband's family." In this way the mother told her daughter of her future duties; but behind the mother's back Kate made a grimace, for the benefit of her sister Fanny, showing thereby her conviction that in a matter of blood—what she called being a gentleman—a Thorough-bury could not approach an Annesley.

"Mamma does not know it as yet," Molly said afterwards in privacy to her brother, "but you may take it for granted that Uncle Peter has been into Buntingford and has made an offer to Aunt Matilda. I could tell it at once, because she looked so sharp at me to-day. And Joshua says that he is sure it is so by the airs she gives herself."

"You think she'll have him?"

"Have him? Of course she'll have him. Why shouldn't she? A wretched old maid living with a companion like that would have anyone."

"She has got a lot of money."

"She'll take care of her money, let her alone for that. And she'll have his house to live in. And there'll be a jointure. Of course if there were to be children——"

"Oh, bother!"

"Well, perhaps there will not. But it will be just as bad. We don't mean even to visit them; we think it so very wicked. And we shall tell them a bit of our mind as soon as the thing has been publicly declared."

CHAPTER XXIV. HARRY ANNESLEY'S MISERY.

THE conversation which took place that evening between Harry and his father was more serious in its language, though not more important in its purpose. "This is bad news, Harry," said the rector.

"Yes, indeed, sir."

"Your uncle, no doubt, can do as he pleases."

"You mean as to the income he has allowed me?"

"As to the income! As to the property itself. It is bad waiting for dead men's shoes."

"And yet it is what everybody does in this world. No one can say that I have been at all in a hurry to step into my uncle's shoes. It was he that first told you that he should never marry, and as the property had been entailed on me, he undertook to bring me up as his son."

"So he did."

"Not a doubt about it, sir. But I had nothing to say to it. As far as I understand, he has been allowing me two hundred and fifty pounds a year for the last dozen years."

"Ever since you went to the Charter-house."

"At that time I could not be expected to have a word to say to it. And it has gone on ever since."

"Yes, it has gone on ever since."

"And when I was leaving Cambridge he required that I should not go into a profession."

"Not exactly that, Harry."

"It was so that I understood it. He did not wish his heir to be burdened with a profession. He said so to me himself."

"Yes, just when he was in his pride, because you had got your fellowship. But there was a contract understood, if not made."

"What contract?" asked Harry with an air of surprise.

"That you should be to him as a son."

"I never undertook it. I wouldn't have done it at the price—or for any price. I never felt for him the respect or the love that were due to a father. I did feel both of them, to the full, for my own father. They are a sort of thing which we cannot transfer."

"They may be shared, Harry," said the rector, who was flattered.

"No, sir; in this instance that was not possible."

"You might have sat by while he read a sermon to his sister and nieces. You understood his vanity, and you wounded it, knowing what you were doing. I don't mean to blame you, but it was a misfortune. Now we must look it in the face and see what must be done. Your mother has told you that he has written to me. There is his letter. You will see that he writes with a fixed purpose." Then he handed to Harry a letter written on a large sheet of paper, the reading of which would be so long that Harry seated himself for the operation.

The letter need not here be repeated at length. It was written with involved sentences, but in very decided language. It said nothing of Harry's want of duty, or not attending to the sermons, or of other deficiencies of a like nature, but based his resolution in regard to stopping the income on his nephew's misconduct—as it appeared to him—in a certain particular case. And

unfortunately—though Harry was prepared to deny that his conduct on that occasion had been subject to censure—he could not contradict any of the facts on which Mr. Prosper had founded his opinion. The story was told in reference to Mountjoy Scarborough, but not the whole story. “I understand that there was a row in the streets late at night, at the end of which young Mr. Scarborough was left as dead under the railings.” “Left for dead!” exclaimed Harry. “Who says that he was left for dead? I did not think him to be dead.”

“You had better read it to the end,” said his father, and Harry read it. The letter went on to describe how Mountjoy Scarborough was missed from his usual haunts, how search was made by the police, how the newspapers were filled with the strange incident, and how Harry had told nothing of what had occurred. “But beyond this,” the letter went on to say, “he positively denied, in conversation with the gentleman’s brother, that he had anything to do with the gentleman on the night in question. If this be so, he absolutely lied. A man who would lie on such an occasion, knowing himself to have been guilty of having beaten the man in such a way as to have probably caused his death—for he had left him for dead under the railings in a London street and in the mid-night hour—and would positively assert to the gentleman’s brother that he had not seen the gentleman on the night in question, when he had every reason to believe that he had killed him—a deed which might or might not be murder—is not fit to be recognised as my heir.” There were other sentences equally long and equally complicated, in all of which Mr. Prosper strove to tell the story with tragic effect, but all of which had reference to the same transaction. He said nothing as to the ultimate destination of the property, nor of his own proposed marriage. Should he have a son, that son would, of course, have the property. Should there be no son, Harry must have it, even though his conduct might have been ever so abominable. To prevent that outrage on society, his marriage—with its ordinary results—would be the only step. Of that he need say nothing. But the two hundred and fifty pounds would not be paid after the Christmas quarter, and he must decline for the future the honour of receiving Mr. Henry Annesley at the Hall.

Harry, when he had read it all, began

to storm with anger. The man, as he truly observed, had grossly insulted him. Mr. Prosper had called him a liar and had hinted that he was a murderer. “You can do nothing to him,” his father said. “He is your uncle, and you have eaten his bread.”

“I can’t call him out and fight him.”

“You must let it alone.”

“I can make my way into the house and see him.”

“I don’t think you can do that. You will find it difficult to get beyond the front door, and I would advise you to abandon all such ideas. What can you say to him?”

“It is false!”

“What is false? Though in essence it is false, in words it is true. You did deny that you had seen him.”

“I forget what passed. Augustus Scarborough endeavoured to pump me about his brother, and I did not choose to be pumped. As far as I can ascertain now, it is he that is the liar. He saw his brother after the affair with me.”

“Has he denied it?”

“Practically he denies it by asking me the question. He asked me with the ostensible object of finding out what had become of his brother, when he himself knew what had become of him.”

“But you can’t prove it. He positively says that you did deny having seen him on the night in question. I am not speaking of Augustus Scarborough, but of your uncle. What he says is true, and you had better leave him alone. Take other steps for driving the real truth into his brain.”

“What steps can be taken with such a fool?”

“Write your own account of the transaction, so that he shall read it. Let your mother have it. I suppose he will see your mother.”

“And so beg his favour.”

“You need beg for nothing. Or if the marriage comes off——”

“You have heard of the marriage, sir?”

“Yes; I have heard of the marriage. I believe that he contemplates it. Put your statement of what did occur, and of your motives, into the hands of the lady’s friends. He will be sure to read it.”

“What good will that do?”

“No good, but that of making him ashamed of himself. You have got to read the world a little more deeply than you have hitherto done. He thinks that he is quarrelling with you about the affair in London, but it is in truth because you

have declined to hear him read the sermons after having taken his money."

"Then it is he that is the liar rather than I."

"I, who am a moderate man, would say that neither is a liar. You did not choose to be pumped, as you call it, and therefore spoke as you did. According to the world's ways that was fair enough. He, who is sore at the little respect you have paid him, takes any ground of offence rather than that. Being sore at heart he believes anything. This young Scarborough in some way gets hold of him, and makes him accept this cock-and-bull story. If you had sat there punctual all those Sunday evenings, do you think he would have believed it then?"

"And I have got to pay such a penalty as this?" The rector could only shrug his shoulders. He was not disposed to scold his son. It was not the custom of the house that Harry should be scolded. He was a fellow of his college and the heir to Buston, and was therefore considered to be out of the way of scolding. But the rector felt that his son had made his bed and must now lie on it, and Harry was aware that this was his father's feeling.

For two or three days he wandered about the country very down in the mouth. The natural state of ovation in which the girls existed was in itself an injury to him. How could he join them in their ovation, he who had suffered so much? It seemed to be heartless that they should smile and rejoice when he—the head of the family as he had been taught to consider himself—was being so cruelly ill-used. For a day or two he hated Thoroughbury, though Thoroughbury was all that was kind to him. He congratulated him with cold congratulations, and afterwards kept out of his way. "Remember, Harry, that up to Christmas you can always have one of the nags. There's Belladonna and Orange Peel. I think you'd find the mare a little the faster, though perhaps the horse is the bigger jumper." "Oh, thank you," said Harry, and passed on. Now Thoroughbury was fond of his horses, and liked to have them talked about, and he knew that Harry Annealey was treating him badly. But he was a good-humoured fellow, and he bore it without complaint. He did not even say a cross word to Molly. Molly, however, was not so patient. "You might be a little more gracious when he's doing the best he can for you. It is not every one who will lend you a horse to hunt for

two months." Harry shook his head, and wandered away miserable through the fields, and would not in these days even set his foot upon the soil of the park. "He was not going to intrude any further," he said to the rector. "You can come to church at any rate," his father said, "for he certainly will not be there while you are at the parsonage." Oh yes, Harry would go to the church. "I have yet to understand that Mr. Prosper is owner of the church, and the path there from the rectory is at any rate open to the public." For at Buston the church stands on one corner of the park.

This went on for two or three days, during which nothing further was said by the family as to Harry's woes. A letter was sent off to Mrs. Brown, telling her that the lodgings would not be required any longer, and anxious ideas began to crowd themselves on Harry's mind as to his future residence. He thought that he must go back to Cambridge and take his rooms at St. John's, and look for college work. Two fatal years, years of idleness and gaiety, had been passed, but still he thought that it might be possible. What else was there open for him? And then, as he roamed about the fields, his mind naturally ran away to the girl he loved. How would he dare again to look Florence in the face? It was not only the two hundred and fifty pounds per annum that was gone. That would have been a small income on which to marry. And he had never taken the girl's own money into account. He had rather chosen to look forward to the position as squire of Buston, and to take it for granted that it would not be very long before he was called upon to fill the position. He had said not a word to Florence about money, but it was thus that he had regarded the matter. Now the existing squire was going to marry, and the matter could not so be regarded any longer. He saw half-a-dozen little Prospers occupying half-a-dozen little cradles, and a whole suite of nurseries established at the Hall. The name of Prosper would be fixed at Buston, putting it altogether beyond his reach.

In such circumstances would it not be reasonable that Florence should expect him to authorise her to break their engagement? What was he now but the penniless son of a poor clergyman, with nothing on which to depend but a miserable stipend, which must cease were he to marry? He knew that he ought to give her back her troth. And yet,

as he thought of doing so, he was indignant with her. Was love to come to this? Was her regard for him to be counted as nothing? What right had he to expect that she should be different from any other girl? Then he was more miserable than ever, as he told himself that such would undoubtedly be her conduct. As he walked across the fields, heavy with the mud of a wet October day, there came down a storm of rain which wet him through. Who does not know the sort of sensation which falls upon a man when he feels that even the elements have turned against him, how he buttons up his coat and bids the clouds open themselves upon his devoted bosom?

Blow winds and crack your cheeks! rage, blow,
You cataracts and hurricanes!

It is thus that a man is apt to address the soft rains of heaven when he is becoming wet through in such a frame of mind; and on the present occasion Harry likened himself to Lear. It was to him as though the steeples were to be drenched, and the cocks drowned when he found himself wet through. In this condition he went back to the house, and so bitter to him were the misfortunes of the world that he would hardly condescend to speak while enduring them. But when he had entered the drawing-room his mother greeted him with a letter. It had come by the day mail, and his mother looked into his face piteously as she gave it to him. The letter was from Brussels, and she could guess from whom it had come. It might be a sweetly soft love-letter; but then it might be neither sweet nor soft in the condition of things in which Harry was now placed. He took it and looked at it, but did not dare to open it on the spur of the moment. Without a word he went up to his room, and then tore it asunder. No doubt, he said to himself, it would allude to his miserable stipend and penniless condition. The letter ran as follows:

"DEAREST HARRY,—I think it right to write to you, though mamma does not approve of it. I have told her, however, that in the present circumstances I am bound to do so, and that I should implore you not to answer. Though I must write, there must be no correspondence between us. Rumours have been received here very detrimental to your character." Harry gnashed his teeth as he read this. "Stories are told about your meeting with Captain Scarborough in London, which I know to be only in part true. Mamma

says that because of them I ought to give up my engagement, and my uncle, Sir Magaus, has taken upon himself to advise me to do so. I have told them both that that which is said of you is in part untrue; but whether it be true or whether it be false, I will never give up my engagement, unless you ask me to do so. They tell me that as regards your pecuniary prospects you are ruined. I say that you cannot be ruined as long as you have my income. It will not be much, but it will, I should think, be enough.

"And now you can do as you please. You may be quite sure that I shall be true to you, through ill report and good report. Nothing that mamma can say to me will change me, and certainly nothing from Sir Magnus.

"And now there need not be a word from you if you mean to be true to me. Indeed, I have promised that there shall be no word, and I expect you to keep my promise for me. If you wish to be free of me, then you must write and say so.

"But you won't wish it, and therefore I am yours, always, always, always your own
FLORENCE."

Harry read the letter standing up in the middle of the room, and in half a minute he had torn off his wet coat, and kicked one of his wet boots to the further corner of the room. Then there was a knock at the door, and his mother entered.

"Tell me, Harry, what she says."

He rushed up to his mother all damp and half-shod as he was, and seized her in his arms. "Oh, mother, mother!"

"What is it, dear?"

"Read that, and tell me whether there ever was a finer human being." Mrs. Annesley did read it, and thought that her own daughter Molly was just as fine a creature. Florence was simply doing what any girl of spirit would do. But she saw that her son was as jubilant now as he had been downcast, and she was quite willing to partake of his comfort. "Not write a word to her. Ha, ha! I think I see myself at it."

"But she seems to be in earnest there."

"In earnest! And so am I in earnest. Would it be possible that a fellow should hold his hand and not write? Yes, my girl; I think that I must write a line. I wonder what she would say if I were not to write?"

"I think she means that you should be silent."

"She has taken a very odd way of

assuming it. I am to keep her promise for her. My darling, my angel, my life! But I cannot do that one thing. Oh, mother, mother; if you knew how happy I am. What the mischief does it all signify—Uncle Prosper, Miss Thoroughbury, and the rest of it—with a girl like that?"

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

VII.

NEXT morning I get safely on board, just as the bell is ringing for a start, and the men are standing by the big hawsers ready to cast them off. What with passengers and luggage, the hauling of ropes and the shouting of orders, there is a considerable bustle on board, while the sailors call to each other in a very Gaelic kind of English. And highly amused is a pleasant-looking Scotch dame at my side, who softly mimics their peculiar voices, "'Ai, yai, ai!' They've a conseed'rabl awcsent, these puir Heeland bodies. They've no' the pewre English we hauf in the Lowlands."

The Gillies family have not come on board. They will join the steamer no doubt lower down the river at Greenock—a plan by which they are able to enjoy another hour of slumber. But I should not like to miss this part of the river with its quays and the big ocean steamers alongside. And then the great building yards, where huge steamers seem to be constructed in dozens at a time, appearing in every stage of progress, from the mere embryonic girder with attachments for future ribs, to the great sea-monster all clothed with iron plates and just ready for launching. And from everywhere the mighty resonant din of hammers—such a hammering as perhaps never till this time was ever heard on the earth's surface, to which Thor and Tubal Cain and the mythic hammermen of old might listen in wonder and amazement.

Through all this, and stopping here and there at riverside piers, the big steamer makes its cautious way, whistling a good deal and going at half-speed, among ships and tugs and steam-ferries. The banks are often pleasant and park-like, and when the river widens out and blue hills appear in the horizon, the scenery becomes really interesting.

Between wooded banks, with fertile country stretching to the foot of the hills, with the white vapour of passing trains

curling afar off, the steamer, putting on full speed, passes all too quickly, and presently the bluff height of Dumbuck appears on the right, and then, with a good deal of smoke lying in the valley between, the rock and castle of Dumbarton. The town appears from behind the rock—a sturdy double-headed rock, with green terraces and ivied walls, and amiable-looking cannon peering out, and here and there the red or white jacket of a soldier.

By this time we are nearing Greenock, and I am looking forward to our arrival, with the prospect of meeting my fellow-travellers, and to our departure, when they tell me breakfast will be served. Most people would rather hail their departure than arrival at Greenock, which is—in all charity—be it said—a detestable-looking spot. But there is a fine on-rush of passengers as we lay up alongside the pier. The Gillies are there, almost at the head of the procession, with Mary Grant, as I discover with a slight additional glance, and a reinforcement from Euston Square—more London tourists, with a great following in the way of boxes and portmanteaux, but these almost overpowered by a sturdy detachment of country people on their way to some local gathering. Then there is another pier to call at, with other London passengers—from St. Pancras this time. But a few hundred passengers more or less seems to make little difference in the big steamer.

If Greenock itself is uninviting, the river makes up for it, spreading out into a fine estuary, land-locked and lake-like, with a border of lofty mountains to the west. It is a pity to leave it for breakfast below, but then a Scotch breakfast is also inviting.

Uncle Jock has met with some City friends—a facetious man from Mark Lane, with a sensible and resolute wife, and another from the Stock Exchange, a quiet sallow man, with a plump, amiable, but intensely sleepy wife, and an irrepressible family, mostly girls, almond-eyed, dark, delightful young things, but of a most fiendish activity. They are chasing each other up and down the deck, when a bell rings.

"What's that for? Breakfast? Oh, jolly! Let's hunt up mamma." Mamma is discovered fast asleep in the saloon in a comfortable corner, with a pile of weekly fiction on her lap, is roused and dragged off, protesting loudly. They sit at the next table to ours, and, once fairly awake,

mamma attacks the breakfast with some resolution. But ever and again her plump soft little hands drop helplessly before her, and she turns her head in a soft appealing way towards us. "Oh, isn't this fatiguing?" With the young ones it is a sharp burst for ten minutes or so, trying everything, and freely commenting on any culinary novelty. Then there is a general cry, "Now, let's put mamma away, and have a jolly good game."

By the time breakfast is over we are at Kirn, a little harbour with yachts and pleasure-boats bobbing about in the swell of our wake, for otherwise there is hardly a ripple on the water; and here there is a grand exodus of fish-wives and of the local passengers generally. And here, perhaps, is one of the finest parts of this noble estuary; a grand reach like an inland sea, stretching to north, and south, and east, the meeting point of loch and firth, with a fine border of hills and distant peaks; and in a few minutes after leaving Kirn we arrive at Dunoon, with a church perched among the trees, and the fragments of a castle on the knoll beyond. We have turned the elbow of the river now, and are steaming nearly due south down the firth. All along the firth every eligible nook is occupied by a snug villa, and the richness, brightness, and movement of the whole scene on this bright and cheerful day is beyond all description. Presently here is Inellan, a green gem on the shore looking down from trees and green fields upon a neat pier, with boats, and yachts, and bustling steamers, and quiet white-winged ships filling in the scene, while over the long low headlands of Bute rise the clear-cut peaks of Arran, and a far shining distance of waters,

Where Cumray's isles with verdant link,
Close the fair entrance of the Clyde.

There is only one drawback to our enjoyment of the rich and varied scene. We go too fast—we would like to call out "Hold! stop! easy a bit; here is something we want to have a good look at," but the swift steamer seems to devour the distance. Lose your place for a minute, and you shut up the guide-book in despair. Well, let us enjoy a cigar, and let Mary Grant find out all the places, and tell us the history of them.

A marvellous thing when we leave Rothesay is to see the big steamer turn round, and leaving behind it the open channel, head directly for the mainland. We seem to be hopelessly entangled among

the hills, but point after point opens out, reach after reach, and we are fairly in the Kyles of Bute, the narrow strait which divides the island from the mainland. Long ranges of hills on one hand, with rocky islands in the channel, and rocky promontories that may turn out to be islands, a bewildering mixture of land and water, and then we touch at a sweet retired little place called Tighnabruich, a pleasant Celtic name that rings sweetly in the ear with all kinds of suggestions of peace and seclusion. But there is no lingering at Tighnabruich; everything goes at the utmost speed of steam. The big steamer is moored stem and stern to the tiny pier, and you can't help thinking that if by accident her engines made a start, she would carry off pier and village, and a good slice of the hillside, cruising away with her. Half-a-dozen stalwart fellows in blue run out the brow, passengers land and embark, and in as short a time as these words are written, the Columba is steaming on again, devouring the distance as before. We have rounded Ardlamont Point, we have left the Kyles of Bute, and now we are in Loch Fyne. You have heard of Loch Fyne herrings. Well, here they are in strings upon the floor of Tarbert Pier. Tarbert of Cantyre, this, and not to be confounded with the Tarbet of Loch Lomond, but each a narrow isthmus between two big lochs, and here on this rocky point outside Tarbert harbour, green with ferns, where sheep are cropping the scanty herbage, and fishermen in blue perched upon the rocks, here is a yellow coach waiting, and horses coming up, coach and horses ready to take any adventurous passengers to the western loch.

A transit somewhat famous in Scottish tradition, Mary Grant reminds us, teste Walter Scott again, who describes the passage of Robert Bruce on his return from exile to set up his standard in his own country.

Up Tarbat's western lake they bore
Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er.

An earlier monarch of still more vague and traditional hue also made the transit in a similar way. "When Magnus, the barefooted king of Norway, obtained from Donaldblane, of Scotland"—son of Shakespeare's Duncan surely—"the cession of the Western Isles, or all those places that could be surrounded in a boat, he added to them the peninsula of Cantyre by this fraud: he placed himself in the stern of the boat, held the rudder, was

drawn over this narrow track, and by this species of navigation wrested the country from his brother monarch."

But while Mary Grant was reading us this little history, we had lost all chance of emulating either Magnus or Robert, for Tarbert Pier was left behind; and the Columba swiftly heading up Loch Fyne soon comes to her moorings at Ardishaig Pier, a magnificent run of more than ninety miles, through rivers, firth, and loch. Now Ardishaig—putting the accent on the "dish" and not the "aig," if you please—Ardishaig is the Port Said of our isthmian transit, for here is the entrance to the Crinan canal, connecting Loch Fyne with the sound of Jura. The Crinan was no doubt intended for a ship canal, but as it was planned in the eighteenth century, when smacks and trading brigs were the only craft appearing in these waters, the accommodation for ships is limited, and we must quit the stately Columba for a much smaller craft.

First a hill has to be climbed, however; a scramble through the pleasant little fishing village, to where the Linnet, a little saloon steamer, is waiting to receive us.

Topmast and pennant glitter free
High raised above the greenwood tree.

At least, if the Linnet cannot boast a topmast she has a very satisfactory funnel, and the feeling of sitting on her deck, with the loch at our feet, and boats sailing off far below us, is novel and rather nice. Indeed, the run through the Crinan is charming, a quite pastoral interlude in this day of mountain and flood. The eye, a little fatigued with long vistas of glittering waters, with long-drawn lines of hills, and an ever-varying panorama of wide and extensive scope, now reposes on verdant thickets of ferns and wild flowers, through which the placid canal, clear and crystal-bright, winds peacefully. A water gallery, from which on one side you have a scene of sterile desolation and mountain wilds, while on the other branches of honeysuckle dangle over the boat, with sprigs of hawthorn and the bonnie wild rose.

And now we pass into a lock, a lock with a "k" if you please, and no Highland lake, but a solid English invention of the Brinsley and Bridgwater order, a lock with high walls, cool and shady. "Just like Teddington Lock," Jock's London friend observes. Shady and cool, with the sunny upper world looking down upon us in the form of a row of children, little bare-legged lassies who salute us as we rise gradually to the sunshine level with a continued

chorus, "Melk, melk, melk!" For each lassie has a can and a glass, and hopes to catch the eye of the thirsty tourist as he steps ashore. For here begins the pilgrimage of the nine locks, a break in the journey, affording a pleasant country stroll by the canal side while the steamer is getting up a staircase of locks, nine steps in a mile. It is a leisurely stroll through a wild secluded country, along which the canal has caused to spring up here and there little white cottages, with their kail-yards. The bare-legged lassies hang on the skirts of the party with their incessant cries of "Melk, melk!" And here there are tables spread in the wilderness, with white cloths and oat-cake and more "melk." Here one good wife to invite confidence has tethered her cow close by, while an enterprising tradesman has set up a little wooden entrepôt for tobacco, walking-sticks, and dry goods generally.

And now the sound of the pipes are heard in the distance as we approach the last of the locks, and over the level sward by the bank of the canal a piper is proudly strutting as

He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl.

And here is spread the last of the tables in the wilderness with cake and "melk." Down below is the stony bed of a stream, and a little farmstead, white and comfortable-looking, while from a little nook in the crags that are sprinkled with a scanty verdure, a group of women, some with red tartan shawls about their heads, are watching the strange but accustomed scene. There is something appropriate, too, in the wild skirl of the pipes, something that harmonises with things around; if somebody would dance a reel now or a strathspey—can Jennie now?

Jennie turns up her nose at the suggestion, but the almond-eyed girls are equal to the occasion. But it is a fandango, I should say, something Spanish, Moorish, or what not, rather than Scotch, ending in a wild romp and much laughter, while the piper shakes his head disapprovingly.

Uncle Jock has not come up yet; he has stopped for a crack with some honest farmer's wife as broad as she is long, and Mary Grant is with him, and so I am thrown upon Jennie for companionship and sympathy. Not that I get much of the latter. That is all reserved for her precious Ronald, who is no doubt enjoying himself thoroughly and troubling himself little about her. But still the girl had a coaxing

way with her as if she wanted to get something out of me, and presently it came out. Would I so manage matters that we should spend a Sunday in Skye, so that Ronald and she might meet? Uncle Jock would be guided by me, but if Jennie ventured to propose such a thing, he would be sure to go dead against it. It was like her impudence to suggest such a thing. Was I to be a go-between in her love-affairs, when my heart was broken already with them. "Pooh!" said Jennie; "why, you're more in love with Mary Grant than you ever were with me; and I'll make a friend of her for your sake, and give you all kinds of chances with her, if you'll only do this for me." And on these terms this iniquitous compact was ratified.

By this time the steamer was in sight, and all the passengers were gathered at the lock-side. The piper was blowing his loudest, having made a satisfactory collection in his Highland bonnet, and the little girls with bare legs were still chanting their monotonous "Melk, melk!" with still greater assiduity as they saw their last chances of doing business escaping them. "Don't give the little things any money," said Jennie sagely; "it demoralises them. Just see that pretty little thing to whom you gave a penny for her pretty face; see her false smile and hard eager eyes as she searches people's faces for other possible pennies." And the last sight we had as we sank down, steamer and all, into the cool lock, was the row of little bare-legged traders all gathered on the brink, and still crying, "Melk, melk!" But, once we had fairly sunk out of reach, away they all went with a hop and a skip, chasing each other down the brae—all children again once more.

Away we go now, at full speed, twirling round the sharp corners with amazing dexterity on the part of the man at the wheel, who is much bothered, by the way, by the women's parasols—bright gaudy things—sticking up against the line of sight. "Was you please pit doon yon umbrellay!" is the coxswain's despairing cry; but the women take no notice of that, of course. Down below us is now a mossy waste, a sort of half-defunct loch, with a border of hills, and high over these is the peak of Ben Cruachan, at the furthest end of Loch Awe. Then there is a nice little white village by the canal, with a creek where a timber-barge from Glasgow is taking in a leisurely load. And this is the only sign of traffic we have seen along the

line of the canal except our own steamer, and the fourgons of passengers' baggage which are pounding along the road. Soon we are in sight of the sea, and of the red funnel of the steamer Iona that is waiting for us down below, but whistling and blowing off steam as if she meant to go without us if we didn't look sharp.

Now I hear Mary Grant descanting on the scenery as we steam out between Jura and the mainland. The Paps of Jura—three conical peaks—are in sight, and islands and mainland, and islands and mainland again, all mixed up, and not to be distinguished in this wonderful archipelago. But if they were the isles of the Hesperides, they would not keep me on deck when once the dinner-bell has rung, so ravenous does one get in the pure keen air. Else there is a whirlpool close by, a very maelstrom;

And Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
Still rings to Corrieveken's roar.

But Corrieveken roars gently to-day—like nothing louder than the murmur of a sea-shell—though, on a stormy day, with the boisterous Atlantic tide rushing through the strait at the rate of eighteen miles an hour, and a sunken rock in the middle to intensify the tumult of waters, if the result is not exactly a whirlpool, it is something just as dangerous and uncanny.

When hunger is satisfied, and we are once more on deck, we find ourselves cruising about among low rocky islets almost awash with the sea. The Mare Islands are in sight to the westward—lone unvisited isles well suited for marvellous legends.

Presently we are among slate rocks and islets that are just the peaks of slate mountains rising sheer out of the waves, and here are quarries that are worked far under the sea, and fishermen sunning themselves like so many seals upon the rocks, with their little cobbles bobbing idly up and down on the clear green waters. And there in front of us are the dark ranges of Mull, and the land of Lorn is on our right, if we could make out mainland from islands.

And now the mountains are closing in all round, the rugged hills of Morven, with green Lismore in front, and the ridges of Appin in the background. Our German band strikes up "My Queen," and shutting my eyes I fancy myself approaching Hammer-smith Bridge on the voyage to Kew. But what a different prospect as we glide behind the island of Kerrera, into the

land-locked Bay of Oban, the bright little town that is climbing up the hillside, with the soft green of Dunolly woods, and the glassy harbour all astir with yachts and pleasure-boats! But everybody's concern now is to get together belongings, and get ashore, where on the steam-boat wharf an eager crowd is waiting our arrival. Hardly are we alongside when the gangway is run out by a crowd of officious touts, and the breath is almost taken away by their simultaneous roar of invitation. However, we have settled our destination beforehand, for a moment's indecision would perhaps result in the tourist's being dragged to pieces by rival touts; and the official porters wheel the heavy baggage off to the hotel, while the rest of us hurry off to the post-office.

Jennie has got her letter, I can see by the triumphant flash of her eye, and I have got as many as I want, and Uncle Jock has satisfied himself that the concern at St. Mary's Axe has not collapsed during his absence, and Mrs. Gillies has two or three epistles from old cronies who are keeping a vain and ineffectual watch upon her house and servants. And even Mary Grant has got one, who only left home this morning. What does she want with a letter? and indeed I eye it rather savagely, although it is no business of mine who writes to her. And Mary catches my eye and blushes a little. "It is from Archie," she explains, "with the latest news about the Vanderpumps," and the happy change in my countenance seems reflected in hers, as she laughs quietly over her letter.

"And I'm all for a quiet day to-morrow," says Uncle Jock, as he stretches his legs on a comfortable bench in front of the hotel; the dimpling bay in front of us all alive with boats going to and fro between yachts and shore; the low hills of Kerrera in a misty kind of shadow, while the sunshine glows on the lofty peaks of Mull. "A real quiet day, you know; breakfast not a minute before nine, and perhaps a boat in the bay with fishing-lines for a pretence, and plenty of tobacco and cool drinks." And how shall I break it to the poor man that I mean to drag him out of bed by six in the morning and start him for Skye by the boat that leaves at seven? I can't do it; and yet Jennie implores me—for to-morrow is Saturday, and Ronald has written to urge her by all loves to reach the island by Sunday. For it seems that he has met a rich uncle on the island—a man who trades about all over

the Western Isles—a bachelor and rather a hard nut. And Ronald thinks it of the greatest importance that Jennie should meet him; but he is going away on Monday, right away to the Shetlands or the Orkneys, and then good-bye to any hopes from that quarter. "And, oh," said Jennie, "I don't like all this hanging on to uncles, but what are poor young bodies to do?"

And so we sought out Mary Grant, and brought her into the plot. And Mary crept up to her uncle and told him how it had been the wish of her heart since childhood to visit Skye. "And so ye shall, lassie," said Uncle Jock. "Just talk it over with yon long-legged chiel, and ye shall plan it all out for us." And so we discovered that the only chance of getting to Skye was by starting on the following morning. To which Uncle Jock gave a growling, grumbling assent.

LOVE SONG.

ERE the lovely dream is broken, ere the glamour
fades away,
Ere the tender mists of morning melt beneath the
perfect day;
While yet around the shrine we kneel at, lingers
the sweet rosy glow,
And the music keeps true measure; darling, let me
go!

Though my foot shrinks back in terror, from the
path that I must tread,
Where dim ghosts each step are haunting, and the
cloud frowns overhead;
Though my hand clings wildly to it; the fond clasp
whose strength I know,
Though my heart half breaks to say it; darling, let
me go!

Aye, the true eyes look undaunted, down the
future's devious way,
And the soul of faith is thrilling in each earnest
word you say;
But the sad eye of experience sees beneath youth's
radiant glow,
Slow and sure Time works his mission; darling, let
me go!

Worse than all, aye, worse than parting, tho' the
word knells like despair,
To watch the flower closely, fondly, and find the
sign of canker there;
To read the first faint touch of languor; the first
impatient chafe to know!
Ere you feel the chain you cherish; darling, let me
go!

Dearest, truest, loved so fondly, loved with passion
never told,
Better death itself than feeling, touch grow careless,
tone ring cold,
While the light is fullest, freest, of the bliss I
treasure so,
While my idol is mine only; darling, let me
go!

Let me go, yet not forget me, all too weak to lose it
quite,
It, the glory and the gladness, flooding every sense
in light;
Love itself, in youth's sweet potency, scarce could
firmer faith bestow,
Yet, just because I love so dearly; darling, let me
go!

A SHORT FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

IT might almost be called a flight for life; but my steps were directed towards Alexandria, not away from it, a statement which at first seems strange and startling in the troubled days in which I am writing.

But when I took wing for the shores of the Nile, I was merely flying from the rigour of the memorably cold winter of 1879-80. I am one of those unfortunates to whom an exceptionally cold season does not by any means suggest the delights of skating, snow-balling, and generally increased jollity, but rather catarrhs, rheumatic twinges, bronchitis, and imprisonment to one room. So I had wandered through Italy, southwards, finding sharp frost at Rome, snow in the streets of Naples, and grey skies and white-capped mountains even in Sicily; where, in the month of December, 1879, a large wood-fire was almost as necessary as it would have been in Switzerland.

There was nothing for it but to fly from Europe altogether. Africa! the very word seemed to have a certain glow about it, and to give one an agreeable thrill like that caused by basking in actual sunshine.

Then this much be-travelled land of Egypt was to me still quite an unknown country, and I had the advantage—from my own point of view—of knowing little or nothing about it even from the innumerable books which have been devoted to the subject.

"There is no new thing under the sun," but there are always new eyes to look upon the old things, the oldest of which are perhaps the most interesting of all; and the impressions conveyed by one's own eyes and ears are certainly the freshest and pleasantest to receive. So I would not be "guided" or "conducted," whether personally or otherwise. I would set my face towards the Land of the Sun, and see what I should see.

What I did see there returns just now with a strange vividness to my mind. This I suppose is natural when our memories of things are blended with the knowledge that those things will be seen never more by anyone.

The City of Alexandria was so far Europeanised in its outward aspects, that when restored and rebuilt—as, of course, it will be—it may not be very unlike the Alexandria of two years and a half

ago; but Cairo, the most thoroughly representative oriental city remaining, in its outward aspects, the chief stronghold of all that is attractive to the purely artistic imagination in all that part of the world—Cairo, if, alas! she should be burnt and ravaged as Alexandria has been by the ruthless Egyptian soldiery, will assuredly arise no more in her former strange beauty. Her hundred graceful minarets; her ancient dwelling-houses with their arabesque carvings, priceless wood-work, and stained glass; all these things once reduced to ashes can never, never be replaced, while the possible fate of many of the peaceful inhabitants of those secluded dwellings fills the mind with tragic, and perhaps prophetic, pictures.

From these it is pleasanter to turn to my recollections of Alexandria and Cairo two years ago. Steaming out of the port of Messina one bright Friday morning in January, we cast anchor in the harbour of Alexandria on the following Tuesday morning. It was a source of much satisfaction to find that our arrival had been thus timed, for vessels can only enter the harbour by daylight; if they approach after sunset they are obliged to lay to until the next morning. No ship may enter without a pilot to take her through the difficult channels of the port, and when the weather is very rough, a vessel may be tossing outside for a day or two if no pilot chooses to go out to her, or if it is thought she draws too much water to allow of her passing over the principal shoal while the waves are running high.

One natural obstruction which it was said might easily have been removed—namely, a rock lying in the middle of the central channel—was jealously preserved by the Egyptian Government, under the idea that the difficulties of entering the port would act as safeguards against the attack of a hostile fleet. But this idea having been now somewhat sternly dispelled, it is to be hoped that, when Alexandria is once more open to the peaceful commerce of the world, this rock may be blown up, when, with a properly-arranged system of buoys, ships might enter and leave the port in safety either by day or night.

I have been much amused to read lately, especially in certain continental newspapers, the most glowing descriptions of the beauty of the Alexandrian shores, and to learn from similar sources that the town itself is the pearl of all the Mediterranean cities. Can it be that some English

cannon-balls, ploughing through the long low monotonous sand-banks which constitute the former, have lent some "enchantment to the view," which did not exist before? Or that Alexandria has really been transformed in two years into an eighth wonder of the world, comprising all the splendours of Paris with the mysterious interest of Damascus?

It certainly was not the case when I was there, and yet if nature and art have not combined to work absolute miracles since then, one is forced to the conclusion that these instructors of the public mind have drawn on their imagination, in default of real experience. It is odd, too, to observe how the accounts have varied with the momentary political bias of the writer, some declaring that Alexandria is an absolutely European city of unparalleled stateliness, and others affirming that it is a unique pearl of Orient. Those persons who have been there, know of course that it was neither; but exhibited a strange jostling of things Eastern and Western, which gave it a peculiar and sufficiently interesting character of its own. Interesting, that is to say, on account of its strangeness, but it cannot be denied that there was something jarring and vulgarising in the way in which European civilisation, as understood by Ismail Pasha, was forced into the midst of this motley population, in the form of stuccoed houses, French cafés, wide, monotonous, shadeless streets, and other European institutions, good, bad, and indifferent.

One civilisation may be grafted upon another; customs and ideas imported from other countries may, and often do, root themselves and flourish vigorously in their new home, and appear at last to have been the natural growth of the soil; but this must always be the result of time, or of certain strong affinities. But the ex-Khedive of Egypt thought to Frenchify, and so to beautify, his chief cities from one day to another, and the "civilisation," thus arbitrarily and abruptly introduced, had no more real value than a rootless flower stuck in a pot to simulate a growing plant.

My first glimpse of the African shore, with its pale gleaming sands, its low line of dazzlingly white buildings, and the sunshine and the dancing water all around, if not beautiful was certainly cheering. Here at least there would be no snow.

The voyage had been bitterly cold. It had been grand, as we sailed away from

Sicily, to get the view of Etna from the sea, but even while admiring the sight I had wished that the white mantle on his mighty shoulders did not hang quite so low, for it seemed to freeze the atmosphere for miles round; and again, passing the island of Candia two days later, we found all the higher hill-peaks hung with snow-clouds, and the lower slopes frosted over like a twelfth-cake; but here at last was sunshine.

I had heard among other things the often-repeated phrase, that Alexandria was entirely Europeanised, and had nothing of the oriental city left except the dirt.

Remarks like these would appear to spring from the careless exaggeration of people who do not observe for themselves. Some of the older and narrower streets, through which the hotel omnibus jolted you from the custom-house, were surely as un-European as possible, with their curious zig-zag upper storeys, projecting wedge-shaped over the street; their jealously-latticed harem windows; their veiled women and turbaned men; and what is, perhaps, most striking of all to a fresh European eye, the camel quietly pacing the streets as an ordinary beast of burden.

Even in the newer portions of the city, where the houses were high rectangular blocks of brick and stucco, with brightly-painted venetian-blinds, just like the houses in any new quarter of Brussels, or Paris, or Rome, and where London coats or Parisian bonnets abounded, still the turban and the yasmak were there side by side with them, as well as a dozen other picturesque and distinctive costumes of various nations, Persian, Indian, Bulgarian, Greek, making up a varied and brightly-coloured crowd the like of which I at least had certainly never seen in Europe.

Suddenly turning a street-corner, where the walls are all pasted over with advertisements of Madame Angot and Le Petit Duc, there comes an Arab funeral. First walks a company of old blind men, with beards as white as their turbans, chanting, or rather intoning, verses from the Koran; then follows a crowd of children performing also a sing-song kind of measure, but in a babbling irregular way. Then the bier, on which the corpse is borne in a deep oblong lidless box, covered with bright red silk, and gaudily ornamented, the turban of the deceased person being stuck on the top of a high wooden projection in front.

Behind the bier come the hired female

mourners in long dark-blue dresses, and thick black veils which only leave a horizontal slit for the eyes, the upper and lower parts being held together by a brass ornament just between the eyes; they utter a shrill monotonous cry at intervals, and flourish fragments of dark stuff which I suppose is meant to express, figuratively, wailing and rending of garments for the loss of the dear departed. They all hurry along at a great pace as if anxious to get it over. All certainly very un-European, and in strange sharp contrast with the "Billards" and the opera.

Then at the hotels, where, of course, one finds the usual black-coated waiters, talking in the usual polyglot manner, dark-visaged white-robed figures are gliding about among them, silently partaking in the service of the table; and finding no bell in your room, you are told to clap your hands when requiring attendance. This, I remember, I felt to be thoroughly and delightfully oriental.

I did not intend to stay long in Alexandria. I was only on my way to a city where I had been promised tepid airs even in January; so to Cairo I would go without delay.

Before leaving Alexandria, however, I took a couple of strolls about the town, to get a general idea of it.

The famous Great Square, or Place des Consuls, as it used to be called, I thought much over-rated and far from imposing. It was quite disproportionately long for its width, and looked, I thought, more like two or three scrubby second-rate squares put end to end, rather than one fine well-arranged space. The shops bordering it on either side were, with few exceptions, rather of the Islingtonian than the Regent Street order, and the trees small, burnt, and scrubby-looking. It was all very well, considering that it was Africa, but after being led to expect something like the Boulevard des Italiens and the Champs Elysées put together, was decidedly disappointing. The main, if not the sole, charm of it lay in the motley crowd which thronged it.

Having wandered right across the town towards the Eastern Harbour, or New Port, as it is called, I remember my attention being attracted by seeing people looking through the interstices in a wooden palisade, which enclosed a waste sandy space close to the sea. Hearing that the work going on inside was being directed in English, I went inside the gate with an

American fellow-traveller of mine, and the gentleman in authority proving to be a compatriot of his, we were politely invited to step forward and see for ourselves what was going on. We looked down into an immense trench, which had been cut around and partly under an enormous granite obelisk—that very "Cleopatra's Needle" which has since been set up so successfully at New York. I remember the gentleman in charge of the works telling us that the whole thing was going to be carried out in a new and superior manner, as he meant to carry away, not only the obelisk, but also the stones of the base on which it had stood, and to set them up in their old order in the New World. He told us that some of these stones had been found to be clamped together with iron in a certain way which no modern engineer appears to have been able to improve upon. I afterwards heard that coins and masonic emblems were found under the foundation-stones. Poor old obelisk! Its transplantation has not thriven with it. The same friend in whose company I first saw it being dug up for shipment to America wrote me lately that a few months of the variable Western clime, with its rains and frosts, had done more to "age" the monument than all the centuries which had passed over its granite head beneath the sun of Egypt. Already the surface had begun to scale and crack, and the hieroglyphics on one side had become almost undistinguishable.

I had been advised to take the evening rather than the morning train to Cairo, a table d'hôte neighbour telling me that it was somewhat quicker and that there was "absolutely nothing to be seen on the road," but I finally decided to make the journey, which only occupied six or seven hours, by daylight, and found no reason to regret my decision.

The country, it is true, was flat and uninteresting, but there were the inhabitants, both biped and quadruped, to be observed, and the flat landscape was, after all, the "Land of Egypt," seen for the first time, and those glistening waters which we kept crossing and recrossing were the waters of Old Nile.

The high road to Cairo from Alexandria runs parallel to the railway, and for a length of time so close as to permit minute observations of the passers-by. Here, therefore, there was plenty to interest and amuse me. Groups of people kept passing who looked as if they had come straight out of

an Illustrated Family Bible; shepherds, water-carriers, camel-drivers, etc., etc., all with flowing garments and free dignified mien. There is always an especial grace about the gait of people who are accustomed to walk barefoot and carry burdens on their heads, and the Egyptian peasantry, both male and female, possess this grace in a remarkable degree. Their dress certainly does not impede the free and natural movements of the body in any way, appearing to consist of a single loose cotton garment falling from the neck to the knees, or to the heels, according to the sex of the wearer, with a turban for the men and a veil for the women.

Here comes a group which looks as if composed for the canvas of one of the old masters. How easily and comfortably the woman, shrouded in her dark-blue draperies, and holding a young child in her arms, sits the small meek donkey which is being so carefully guided by that bearded and turbaned man. In all probability the man is her servant; an Egyptian husband of to-day would certainly be riding the donkey, letting his wife follow on foot with the baby.

Now passes a string of camels bearing great bales of merchandise; anon comes an important-looking personage clothed in silk and riding a good horse; his servant runs in front, and easily keeps pace with the animal's brisk trot.

Presently follow more camels, almost disappearing under their burden of freshly-cut sugar-canes, which take a waving undulating movement from the slow rocking step of the animals; and the next comer is a gigantic buffalo-bull, led by a tiny girl of some four or five years, to whose motion and voice the great clumsy-looking brute is perfectly obedient.

The great size of the cattle and camels grazing in the fields has almost the effect of an optical illusion as one looks across the level country; the diminutive donkeys—who, by the way, seem to have all the pluck, and do all the work—look no bigger than dogs beside them.

"An Arab village," exclaims a fellow-passenger, and I look in the direction indicated, but only see a group of tall date-palms and a small collection of mud-heaps at their feet. I think to myself that if that be a village at all it can only be a settlement of beavers—and there are no beavers in Egypt. But on approaching nearer I find that the distance, and the great height of the trees, have deceived my

eye, and that the mud-heaps are large enough to serve for human habitations, although apparently possessing no other qualification for that purpose.

The dark forms of women are seen passing in and out, and little brown naked children stop in their play to shake their hands menacingly at the passing train.

At all the small stations where the train stopped, hordes of these little creatures who could get anywhere within throwing distance stood and screamed for "back-sheesh" in a deafening manner, but those who were too far off to have any hope of a copper consoled themselves by cursing us all as Christians.

It was odd to observe at the wayside stations, groups of quite well-dressed persons sitting on the ground, or an outspread shawl or rug, while waiting for their train, looking quite composed and comfortable, where Europeans of the same class would have been wandering restlessly up and down, or leaning uncomfortably against posts in default of benches.

After passing Kaliob junction, which is the last station before the capital, the country becomes much prettier; little wooded tracts, interspersed with handsome villas and flowering gardens, form a most agreeable relief after the monotony of the muddy level plain, and the traveller feels as if an oft-recurring dream were at last realised, when the lofty slender minarets of the Mosque of Mohammed Ali on the citadel hill are seen cutting the sky towards the east, about the same time that one comes in view of the chain of the Lybian hills, stretching away to the west, behind the Pyramids.

The sense of familiarity with many of these strange and beautiful scenes, which I had while looking on them for the first time, would not probably be peculiar to me.

I had thought that I knew as little as possible about Egypt, and yet the first view of Cairo and the Pyramids seemed as familiar to me as possible. An idea of it all had been imbibed, without knowing it, from books and pictures. It was afterwards that the strangeness grew, and that one came to observe differences more than resemblances.

At Cairo, even before leaving the railway-station, I felt myself at once to be much farther from Europe, and more decidedly amidst an alien people, than the six hours' journey from Alexandria would seem to account for. One had immediately

a vivid sense of being a mere unit in the midst of a thoroughly Mussulman population, differing from, and generally antagonistic to, ourselves at almost every point.

The Arabs with whom I came most in contact afterwards, during a four months' residence in Cairo, were naturally those who depend chiefly for their livelihood on the advent of strangers and foreigners like myself. All these naturally show themselves extremely tolerant of the singularities and errors of the Nazarene, so long as the francs are in brisk circulation, but it was impossible not to have a distinct perception that they no more admired or desired to imitate our ways than we theirs.

They are sensible to kindness, however, and their gratitude is not entirely "a lively sense of benefits to come," for it was not at all uncommon to hear them speak of some one particular traveller whom they had served, but whom they could scarcely hope to see again, with the greatest regard and respect.

"Very good gentleman, Mr. So-and-so, very kind, always gave the Arab good words;" or, "Very nice lady, she always ask for my little sister; very nice lady, now I like to see that lady again."

I suppose it would be impossible for any human beings, who were not on terms of mortal enmity to begin with, to be thrown much together in mutual dependence without growing to like each other better. I have known of many tempting offers being made to Arab and Nubian servants by European travellers who had grown to rely thoroughly on the good service and kindly feeling of the former, and the Arabs who are thrown into close contact with Europeans, such as donkey-boys, shopkeepers, servants, seem to like them and get on well with them, although doubtless with the mass of the population a Christian is an object of scorn and dislike.

MY COUSIN ALICK.

A STORY.

THERE were three little girls living in the big old house at Clipstone, of which I was the eldest and the plainest. Our parents were well-to-do people, and owned the pretty old place in which we had all been born and brought up. When Cousin Alick came down to spend a month with us before going to India, I was just twelve years old, a slim, dark, quiet girl, old beyond my age in manner and feeling, and

very proud was I of his friendship for me and preference for my society. It was in the summer-time, and in the evenings I would often be sitting in the garden with my lesson-books while the elders were at dinner; and after mother had gone to the drawing-room, or to the nursery, and father had fallen asleep over his cigar, Alick would step out of the window and come over the lawn to me, the cloud on his brow—for he nearly always looked moody at that time, perhaps even what might be called sullen—lifted a little at the sight of my pleasure at seeing him, for I was dearly fond of this big cousin of mine.

He was very kind to me in spite of the evident weight on his spirits; he would sit by my side and help me with my lessons, explaining the hard words that I could not understand, and telling me many little things which I was not required to know, but which all helped to fix the subject in my mind. I think our governess must have been surprised at my rapid progress about this time; this I certainly know, that not one word of Cousin Alick's was ever forgotten by me—each one lives freshly in my memory to this day.

He was, as I have said, very gloomy and often absent-minded, and from inadvertent remarks dropped now and then by my parents in my hearing, I dimly understood that he was in trouble with his own family, and that was why he had come to stay at his uncle's until his ship sailed. He had just returned from Oxford, I knew, and there were whispers of debts, and of being "plucked"—whatever that might be—and I gathered that he was in disgrace with his father, our uncle, Alexander Blair, who was considered a stern and rigorous man. We children, Valerie and I—Nina was little more than a baby—stood in great awe of him, and I loved and pitied Alick only the more when I heard of these things. Our father had got him this post in India to which he was going out, but I don't think he had any great hopes of his nephew, for I heard him say to my mother one day that "Alick was a clever fellow enough, but there was not a bit of industry or application about him."

I remember him well as he was then, even though I have seen so much of him since, and he is so altered. He was twenty-one years old, a tall, dark, lean youth with a bare fallow face and resentful-looking black eyes. I suppose he was what would be called very "fresh" or "raw," but I was only a child, and I loved him dearly,

and thought him handsome, perfect, heroic. I know he was sulky and bad-tempered, but I think that was, in a great measure, the fault of his father, who snubbed and bullied the naturally high-spirited lad until all his good qualities were hidden under the bad passions which his severity brought uppermost.

During that time of his stay at our house I saw a great deal of my cousin. There was no other visitor, and he did not care for the society of children such as Valerie and Nina—they were too babyish, too full of noisy play, though Valerie was a beautiful child, just nine years old, fair and golden-haired, laughing and witching, admired by everyone except, perhaps, Alick, who was not one of an age to care for children, and who liked me because I was grave and old beyond my years, and could sympathise, in some degree, with his vague regrets and hopes. I loved my cousin in those days—words are powerless to tell how dearly! Even now, when I see him in the nobility of his perfect manhood, the hopes of his boyhood realised, the height of his aspirations attained, I still look back with yearning tenderness to the raw lad who taught me, all unconsciously, the meaning of the word “love.”

The day of his departure came at last. The dog-cart waited at the door, and father and he were all ready to start. Father was going to see him on board his ship—Uncle Alexander would not have anything to do with him, not even so much as to wish him good-bye.

Valerie had run away laughing, and hiding her face when mother told her to go and kiss Cousin Alick, for she would not see him again for a very long while, but he did not care for that—he was not thinking of her, little spoilt child.

He was very pale, I remember that, and when mother drew him aside in the hall and whispered in his ear, he flushed red, and then went paler than before. But he kissed mother again, and muttered something that sounded like, “I will try.”

He came to me then, and kissed me several times, very tenderly.

“Good-bye, dear little Ruth,” he said; “don’t forget Cousin Alick—he will not forget you.”

That was all he said, but it was treasured up in my childish heart, until those parting words of his were more real to me than all the others which were spoken to and around me every day of my life. I think he was sorry to leave

us, I think his lip was quivering a little as he ran down the steps and got into the dog-cart. Father drove, and as they turned out of the avenue into the road Alick looked back at the house, and seeing me still standing on the steps, kissed his hand to me, not lightly, smilingly, but with a very grave, and even sorrowful face. He was gone then, and I could not help shedding a few tears—I was only a child, after all. Valerie, who ran out of her hiding-place when she had made sure he was gone, finding me crying, laughed, and pulled my hair, and persecuted me in her pretty, teasing, charming way, but I could not bear it then. I went away from her upstairs, and shut myself in mother’s dressing-room, and cried until I had no more tears to shed.

The time passed on very quietly and evenly after Cousin Alick was gone. I was fully occupied with school-room duties, and Valerie ought to have been also, but no one could make her do more than she chose. She was—of her own accord—a little dunce, but such a beautiful bewitching dunce, no one knew how to find fault with her. We all loved her so dearly, we could not bear to scold her. My mother was very well satisfied with my attainments. I had good abilities, and had made use of them, but nothing could make me pretty, like our Valerie. I don’t think I was plain in those days. I was tall and slender, with dark hair and a pale face, and large grave dark eyes, but there was no brilliancy, no charm about me, such as my beautiful second sister possessed.

We heard little of Alick. He did not write very often, and when he did I did not see his letters, or know much of what they contained. There were great hardships and privations to be endured in his rough life out there, but father said they would do him good, and teach him what work was. I do not think he ever complained of them—dear Alick!

At seventeen I went to my first ball. Oh, how Valerie envied me! She stayed in my room all the while Simmons was dressing me, turning over my things and admiring them, and wishing she were in my place. I joined heartily in her wish, for I did not care to go. Mother said it was time I began to go into society, but I felt I should never care for it. Valerie could not understand me, she thought me so odd, and told me so, laughing and showing her little pearly teeth, while she stood by the toilet-table and tried on my bracelets, and fluttered my fan, and made believe she was

being asked to dance, and pleased herself with many a pretty pretence. Already, at fourteen, she was as tall as I, and very womanly-looking. Mother began to despair of keeping her in the school-room for three years longer, and yet it seemed necessary, she knew scarcely anything, and frankly admitted her ignorance. But she smiled so enchantingly over her confession, and spoke so sweetly, that people only laughed, and thought her the more charming.

I enjoyed that first ball of mine very well—better, indeed, than I had expected. I received a fair amount of attention, and had no lack of partners. Valerie was fast asleep in bed, of course, when we got home, but the next morning she waylaid Simmons as she was carrying a cup of tea to my room, and brought it in herself, in order to hear my adventures. I had not much to tell her about myself. I had met no handsome lover, no hero of romance, no one—though I did not say this aloud—to compare with the hero of my childhood, poor dear Cousin Alick. Valerie was rather disappointed at my commonplace experiences, but her lovely face flushed and glowed with interest as I described the glittering ball-room, the entrancing music, the lights, the brilliant crowds, the excitement of it all, which I knew she could appreciate so much better than I.

"How shall I wait three whole years?" she cried, clasping her hands together, and I smiled as I answered:

"Time enough yet, Valerie; and, who knows?—you are so tall and womanly for your years, you might not have to wait so long, perhaps, if only you would try to study a little more, dear."

She said she would really be more industrious, and promised to practise two hours every day—a promise broken almost as soon as uttered—if I would plead with mother for her, which I was very willing to do, for I knew her appearance would cause a sensation in our circle, and I thought that when mother had such a beautiful daughter to take about with her she would think less of me, and perhaps let me go back to the quiet home-life, which I always preferred. Our mother was most affectionate and devoted—a sweet woman, but ambitious, too, for her children, and I could see she wished me to marry well, though no such words were ever uttered in my presence. But I knew, too, that all my heart was taken up with my childhood, and I dreaded her natural

surprise at my indifference to the gaieties which are generally so fascinating to a young girl just out. She put it all down, however, to my natural quietness and reserve, and when I refused my first offer of marriage she was not angry, nor even vexed, though it was what the world would call a good one. She talked to me very kindly, sympathising with me, and telling me never to marry a man whom I could not love and honour. Dear mother! She could not tell that my heart was already occupied, and it was not for me to speak, but I hoped that at some time in the future she might know the truth through other lips. For he did care for me. We had been very fond of each other during that month of constant intercourse, and I think he was more grieved at the parting with me than with anyone else. Of course there was a wide difference between us. He was a man even then, if only a very young one, while I was a mere child. He might marry out there—it was as likely as not—but he had not done so as yet, and until that came to pass I would allow myself to love him with all the passion of my reserved nature.

Father had not much opinion of his doings. His letters were but few and short, and contained little news of himself, and father seemed to think his silence a bad sign, and that if he had anything good to tell of himself he would tell it. But when I was nineteen, Uncle Alexander died, leaving all his property to Alick, with a loving message of farewell and forgiveness, for he relented at the last. Cousin Alick wrote a long letter then to father and mother—the first of his that I ever saw—such a manly noble letter. I knew when I read it that I had not been mistaken in him—that he was well worth a woman's best love. It held such good news, too, of himself. He had been working so hard all these years, never stopping to take pleasure, working on to pay his debts and make himself quite independent of any of his relations, only he would not say a word until he had achieved his task; and now, just when Uncle Alexander's property came to him, he could stand entirely by himself, an independent man. But he did not slight his father's wealth—far from it. He was only glad to see how fully Uncle Alexander had forgiven him, and was comforted inexpressibly by his dying message. He spoke so kindly and regretfully of his father, as if he had never been harsh to him—as if

he had been as tender a father to him as my own was to me. I loved him a thousand times more dearly after reading his kind, sorrowful, manly words. Mother cried over them, and father coughed and got behind his newspaper, while I crept out into the garden to think. I had nothing to regret, as they had. I had never misjudged him, never believed him anything but good, and true, and honest. My heart was full of joy that summer morning.

After that we all began to expect him home. Now there was a home and a place for him in his own country, we did not see why he should stay out in India, spending his best years among strangers. He did not come, however, and when I attained my majority he was still absent.

Valerie was eighteen then—the loveliest girl in the county, everyone said, and a terrible coquette, though she never really meant to hurt anyone. I think mother expected great things for her, but if she had found me difficult to please, she now discovered that Valerie was a thousand times more so, for she had so many lovers to choose between, and I had but a few. High and low, rich and poor, eligible and ineligible, all flocked to my sister's feet, and laid their hearts down before her; not to be spurned in haughty disdain—that was not our Valerie's way—but to be smiled at, and coquetted with, and gently put aside with a few winning words that sent them away more madly in love with her than ever, and ready to forgive her anything.

But at last, when mother was trying to count up the number of lovers she had rejected, and was getting really vexed at her caprice, there came one who seemed to find favour even in her critical eyes. He was a young clergyman, named Carus Wyckham, well-connected, and in every way desirable, but we thought it a strange choice for our laughing bright-spirited Valerie to make. He was a young, grave man, with a serious fair face, and pale golden hair brushed away from his forehead in smooth shining waves. He was not handsome—not even good-looking—but there was something saintly, even angelic, in his face. He had a splendid voice, full and sonorous, like the richest deepest notes of an organ; and when he preached I used to think the beauty of his tones would have lent power and grandeur to the most commonplace sermon. But his sermons were not commonplace, for he was not a commonplace

man. They were like himself—deep, and grave, and tender, striking far into the hearts of the people.

I could not tell whether Valerie really loved him; she certainly liked and respected him—everyone did that—and his patience with her changing moods and his self-denying love for her were wonderful to behold. I think she tried him very much at times with her wilfulness and frivolity, but he soon began to gain an influence over her; she seemed to like to be with him; “it rested her,” she would say, smilingly, as they walked off to the garden to sit under the trees and read or talk. For they talked together a great deal, and he was beginning to teach her that there are higher and better things to live for than balls and garden-parties, dressing and coquetting. They were not to be married for two years, for she was only eighteen, and father and mother thought her too young to marry.

And all this time I had remained true to the secret love of bygone days, while my mother wondered and sometimes worried about me, and talked me over with my father. This I know, because on one occasion I heard him answer:

“Let her alone, my dear; there's time enough yet. Ruth will find her heart some day.”

We had one beautiful photograph of Cousin Alick, which he had sent to us soon after the death of his father. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I saw the change that the years had made in him. He left us a long, lean, moody-looking youth—here was a fine, broad-chested, handsome man, with a bold bronzed face, smiling brilliant eyes, and an air of dash and daring about him which fairly took my mother's heart by storm.

I could not take the photograph away, because it was not mine, and would have been missed, for mother was always showing “her nephew, Alick Blair,” to some one or other, but when they were all out of the way, and I thought myself safe, I used to steal into the drawing-room and turn over the pages of the album in which his picture was until I came to the beloved face, and there would my eyes dwell long and tenderly. But still he did not come home, and when I was twenty-two years old, mother sent me on a long visit to a widowed sister of hers in Ireland. It had been an old promise that one of us should go and stay with her at some time, and so, at last, the lot fell upon

me. Long afterwards I found out that mother had been writing to her about me, telling her that she did not know what to make of me, and my aunt had answered, asking to be allowed to have the charge of me for a time—she might be able to remove my apparent objection to marriage.

I stayed two months in Ireland. It was not a very happy time, though we saw a great deal of company, and went out every evening when we were not ourselves entertaining. She was a very masterful woman, with none of my mother's sweetness and winning ways to soften her character, and she set all her wits to work to force me into a marriage with a wealthy Irish gentleman who made me an offer during my stay. But I could not yield either to persuasions or commands, for I did not even like him, much less love him, and she was displeased with me, and I, of course, was unhappy. I think mother could not have thoroughly understood Aunt Celia's disposition, or she would not have sent me to stay with her, I feel sure. Just as I had made up my mind to write to her and tell her about it, and beg her to send for me to come home, I received one from her instead, telling me that Cousin Alick had arrived quite unexpectedly, and was staying at our house.

"You will like to see him," she wrote, "for, if I remember, you and he were great friends years ago. He is so altered, so much improved, we are all so pleased with him. If you can make up your mind to leave your aunt's gay circle, I should like you to return home at once. Alick is eager to see you, and I think he will be surprised at the alteration in you."

"Who is this Cousin Alick?" enquired my aunt, with a sharp look at me from under her brows when I showed her my mother's letter.

"He is father's nephew, Aunt Celia, and has been out in India since he was twenty-one."

"H'm! How long ago was that?"

"Just ten years—yes, he must be thirty-one now."

"Is he well off?"

"I believe so."

"H'm!" again, with another sharp glance at my changing face. "Well, perhaps you had better go, child."

I knew what was in her mind, and it made me ashamed, and yet my heart leaped high with joy at the thought of meeting him again. I wrote to my mother, telling her how glad I should be

to come home, but as my deliverance was near, I reserved the story of my troubles until I should see her. I said, of course, that I should be very pleased to meet Cousin Alick again, but no word of the heart-gladness which I really felt passed my lips, or rather my pen.

My letter was answered in a few days by my father in person, who came to pay a short visit to Aunt Celia as well as to fetch me home.

Oh, how intolerably long the time seemed to me—how that week dragged by—spent so pleasantly by my father in shooting expeditions and other excursions of pleasure with Aunt Celia's Irish friends. He knew I had wanted to come, but he had no idea of the fever of unrest which possessed me—he did not think that a week more or less could make any difference to me, while the precious time of Alick's stay was being wasted, and he might be returning to India soon for all I knew. And when he had smoked, and shot, and chatted one week away, he actually proposed staying another, and would certainly have carried out his intention had he not chanced to catch my eye at that moment, and seeing, I am afraid, some regretful expression therein, altered his mind.

"No, we'll go on Tuesday after all," he said kindly. "I forgot that my little Ruth here has not seen her mother for two months, and there's her cousin home from India, too. Yes, we'll go on Tuesday."

"What sort of young man is this nephew of yours?" enquired my aunt, just as sharply as she had questioned me.

"As fine a fellow as ever breathed," returned my father, and I knew that from him was high praise.

I am afraid my cheeks flushed with pleasure as I heard his warm commendation.

"Rich?" pursued my aunt. My father quite understood her ideas, and if he had not she would not have cared.

"Oh yes," he answered carelessly; "quite a nabob. He made a nice little fortune of his own out there, and has the whole of my brother's property as well."

"Ah!" ejaculated my aunt, looking satisfied.

And after that she did not press father to stay as much as a day longer.

Tuesday night we spent on the boat. I could not sleep, though I was very comfortable; I lay awake, thinking that the morrow would bring me face to face with my hero once more after ten long years of anticipation. How would he look? What would

say? What would he think of me? Would he consider me improved, as my mother's letter had certainly implied? Would he have quite forgotten those days we spent together in the garden long ago, or would he remember—a little? These were the thoughts which chased one another through my brain all the night long; but when morning came I was not weary. I was too happy and excited for that.

It was a good distance to Clipstone, and my father took the journey in his usual sure way, so that it was quite four o'clock in the afternoon before we reached our house.

Mother was in the drawing-room, with Nina. They said Valerie had been out in the garden ever since luncheon, and that Alick had gone a little while ago to find her. Mother was very pleased to have me back again, even though I had still proved obdurate; and she thought the change had done me good. No wonder, when my cheeks were so red—I could feel how they burned—and my eyes were so bright with eager looking forward. But he did not know that. Someone else had improved too during my absence. Nina was growing a most beautiful girl. She was seventeen now, and received a great deal of attention. She was not at all in Valerie's style, though quite as fair, with a clear pale skin and rich golden hair. But she was queenly, haughty—almost scornful to her many admirers, who served her as much in fear as in admiration. There were people who said that in another year or two she would quite eclipse her sister; but to me there was nobody in the world to compare with our laughing, witching, loving Valerie.

Mother had good reason to be proud of her two younger daughters, yet she never for one moment forgot me or slighted me, though I had certainly disappointed her in opposing her wishes so decidedly all these years. Oh, it was so good to meet her kindly smile, instead of Aunt Celia's sharp glances from beneath her brows—to hear her soft words of gentle guidance instead of Aunt Celia's stern commands!

Carus Wyckham came in while we were still in the first bustle of greeting. He said he had just half an hour to spare, so thought he would call in passing. And very glad was I to see him, even though my mind was full of other things. Carus and I were always good friends. We talked a few minutes longer, and when I had drunk a cup of tea, as I was not in

the least tired, my dear mother, knowing that he had called to see Valerie, and would be disappointed if he had to leave before she came in from the garden, proposed that he and I should go together, and take her and Alick by surprise.

"Very likely Alick won't know Ruth," she said smilingly, "and will wonder what strange lady Carus has brought with him."

So, after stealing a look into the glass to see if my hair was smooth, and—well—how I was looking altogether, I stepped out on to the lawn with Carus. That glance had satisfied me very well; I was looking my best, what with the unwonted colour in my cheeks and the sparkle in my eyes. Of course I could not compare with Valerie, but then no one expected that.

We crossed the lawn, Carus talking to me in his quiet brotherly fashion, with the sunlight falling on his uncovered head and irradiating his calm, grave face. There were times—generally when he was preaching or praying in church—when I had seen that quiet face lit up with an almost heavenly radiance; and though I sometimes speculated as to how he and Valerie would get on together in married life, with their different tastes and inclinations, I yet could not wonder at his power over her. There was something irresistible about this young grave man.

We went to the arbour, but they were not there, nor in the rose-garden or the hot-houses. Then Carus thought of the kitchen-garden. Valerie was fond of fruit, and he had sometimes found her there, eating strawberries or any fruit that happened to be in season, when he had searched all other places in vain. Of course Alick would willingly join her in such a raid, so thither we bent our steps.

To reach the kitchen-garden we had to pass a small but dense shrubbery, on the other side of which was a narrow path leading to the stables. As we went by we heard voices, and though we could not distinguish what was said, we recognised the owners directly—Valerie's soft accents only just audible, and a deep full voice, the sound of which made my heart beat fast and loud, for, though so much richer and more manly than when I heard it last, it was still the same voice which I had learnt to love ten years ago.

"There they are!" said Carus; "they must have been to the stables, then."

And turning aside, we entered upon the narrow path behind the shrubbery, and half-a-dozen steps brought us in full view

of Valerie and—her lover! Yes, lover—for his arms were folded about her, her head lay on his broad breast, and there they stood, all unconscious of observation, wholly wrapped up in their love!

Ah, what a face the sun shone upon—as dark as a Spaniard's, as noble as a king's—full of fire, and passion, and tenderness. My wildest dreams of my cousin Alick were more than realised when my eyes fell once more upon his splendid face, glowing with love for another than me.

"I ought not to have spoken," he was saying; "but I loved you so, Valerie—I loved you directly I saw you, and I thought sometimes that you— My dearest, I ought to be the last in the world to teach you to be faithless, yet, if what you tell me is true, it would be a sin to marry him."

"Oh, yes, yes," she answered, and I never heard my sister's voice so moved before; "it is true, indeed. I never knew what it was to love until you came. It was reverence, respect, liking, that I felt for him—anything but love."

"My sweet! But there, I won't call you that—I will not touch your lips again—while you belong to another!"

I had heard enough—too much. This was how they met, then, who had parted without so much as a farewell! I turned to Carus with a face that—but I cannot tell how I looked, I only know how I felt, in that moment.

He took me by the hand and drew me gently away. We walked back in silence down the path we had come, and presently I raised my eyes to his face, scarcely conscious of my own pain in this first overwhelming blankness.

He looked stricken; there is no other word to describe what I read in his face in that one glance. He walked on mechanically, until we reached the little creeper-covered arbour where we had first sought them, and there we went in and sat down, still in silence. Carus leaned his arms upon the table, and after a little while his golden head stooped down upon them, until his face was hidden.

"Carus, Carus!" I cried at last, but he did not answer me.

"Carus," I wailed, "you are not alone; I am suffering too. For, if you loved her, I loved him! All these years I have loved him—and this is the end."

I could not have spoken so to any other person on earth, but Carus was not an ordinary man. He seemed so far above men's weaknesses and foibles, and yet was

so tender with all of them. He lifted his head at my sorrowful cry, and smiled on me with infinite compassion.

"Poor child!" he said. "And I was thinking only of myself! But I did not know, Ruth; how could I? Poor child!"

He laid his hand pityingly upon my head as I knelt beside the table, speaking gentle words of comfort and strength, putting aside all thought of his own grief to minister to my need.

"What shall we do?" I asked presently.

"There is nothing for you to do," he returned. "You must endure; it is I who must act, and yours is often the harder task; but that will be mine also, afterwards."

"Then you mean to—"

"I shall not see her again," he said quietly. "I shall write to her, and give her that which she craves—her freedom. My best beloved," he continued, speaking as if momentarily unconscious of my presence, "did you think I would for one moment withhold aught that might conduce to your happiness, your welfare? Heaven forbid it."

His face was rapt, a light as if from another world beaming upon it. He looked down at me again, and returned to my sorrows.

"Poor child!" he said once more. "It is hard now, both for you and for me; but we know to whom to go in our sorrow."

"Were they—were they much together?" I asked after a pause.

"I do not know. If they were I did not notice it. I never thought——"

He broke off, and I took up his words with some bitterness.

"No, you never thought she could be false to you, that he would steal your best treasure."

"Don't, Ruth," he interposed with gentle firmness; "don't blame her, or him. They loved each other, they were made for each other; what wonder he spoke when he saw that his love was returned. Mine was the mistake, to think I might ever—I would not have it otherwise; it would have been, as he said, a sin for her to marry me, loving him."

He spoke so calmly, so firmly, but looking at his face as he raised his grave blue eyes to the summer sky for one moment, I felt that he had received his death-blow. I broke down into bitter weeping, until he laid his hand upon my head again. That tender touch, as of benediction, stopped my violent sobs, laid my passion to sleep with its soothing power. He paused a moment,

standing by my side, and then stooped down to speak in my ear :

"Say unto happiness, 'I can do without thee;' with self-renunciation life begins."

I did not speak, I could not. The solemn words opened up to me such a noble life of self-forgetfulness. Was such a one as I able to walk in it? Could I take up my cross and go on my way with a smiling face, living for others alone, trampling bravely upon this poor wounded shrinking self? But he would, I knew, and I could but try. It did seem strange, though, and just at first a little cruel, that my beautiful sister, with her many conquests, must needs fix upon the one man whom I loved. Still, he might never have loved me; I had no real reason to think he would have done so even if he had never seen Valerie; it was only my foolish imagination after all.

And all Carus's devotion, all his patience and tenderness, were as nothing compared to Alick's love. Well, I could not blame her, seeing that I loved him myself.

"Ruth," he continued, "we must separate now, perhaps never to meet again in this world. But we shall never forget this hour. We have been linked together in sorrow; let us look forward to a joyful meeting in the glorious future that awaits us, where grief and trial are unknown. Good-bye, dear Ruth; may God bless and comfort you."

He pressed my hand, and left me.

Alick and Valerie have been married ten years now. I kept my secret well, and no one has ever guessed the reason of my determination to remain single. It was hard at first; my life seemed very bare and desolate, stripped of its love, but time brought comfort, and every day brings me nearer to my rest. I never saw anyone else for whom I could care, and I could not marry without true love; so here I am, an old maid, and my best affection is lavished on their eldest boy Alick, such a fine bright lad, and really fond of his auntie, too.

Valerie is a sweet woman, her husband has just the qualities which she needs to supplement her own, and their union is indeed blessed. I think she grows every day more like her mother—our dear mother, who has slept beneath the turf

these six years. I live near them, and see them and their children constantly, sometimes two or three times in a day. Alick often comes in to give me advice about my plants and grapes; such a fine noble-looking man he is. I wish his father could see him now, with his half-dozen children tumbling and laughing around him, and scrambling to walk next to "faver." We are capital friends, he and I, and when he sometimes teases me about my determined old-maidenism, he never guesses that the faded woman who smiles so calmly at his sallies gave up all other love for the love of him. That is all put aside now, cast out of my life long ago, and the love which I might not feel for him is given to his children.

Six months after Carus Wyckham bade me farewell in the little harbour at Clipstone I heard of his death, from fever caught during his ministrations to the fever-stricken in a poor London district. I knew he was glad to go; death would come to him as a welcome visitor. I did not sorrow for him, for I saw his heart was broken on the day when he found my sister Valerie in Alick's arms. But I went to my desk and took out the letter he wrote to her, which she showed to me, and which I kept. Such a noble letter it was. She never guessed what he suffered; he let her think him cold, pre-occupied, anything, rather than give her pain for his sake. And in accordance with his implied wish, I did not tell her the truth, I did not tell her his heart was broken, and I even kept the news of his death from her, lest she should think her inconstancy in any degree hastened it. For I knew he would wish it so.

She has forgotten him now, forgotten all else in the love of her husband and children; but I, sitting alone by the hearth, often think of him, and in the fire-light I sometimes see his face as I saw it on that day in the garden when we parted for the last time.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXV. HARRY AND HIS UNCLE.

HARRY was kissed all round by the girls, and was congratulated warmly on the heavenly excellence of his mistress. They could afford to be generous if he would be good-natured. "Of course you must write to her," said Molly when he came downstairs with dry clothes.

"I should think so, mother."

"Only she does seem to be so much in earnest about it," said Mrs. Annesley.

"I think she would rather get just a line to say that he is in earnest too," said Fanny.

"Why should not she like a love-letter as much as anyone else?" said Kate, who had her own ideas. "Of course she has to tell him about her mamma, but what need he care for that? Of course mamma thinks that Joshua need not write to Molly, but Molly won't mind."

"I don't think anything of the kind, miss."

"And besides, Joshua lives in the next parish," said Fanny, "and has a horse to ride over on if he has anything to say."

"At any rate, I shall write," said Harry, "even at the risk of making her angry." And he did write, as follows:

"Buston, — October, 188—.

"MY OWN DEAR GIRL,—It is impossible that I should not send one line in answer. Put yourself in my place, and consult your own feelings. Think that you have had a letter so full of love, so noble, so true, so certain to fill you with joy, and then say whether you would let it pass without a word of acknowledgment. It would be absolutely impossible. It is not very probable that I should ask you to

break your engagement, which in the midst of my troubles is the only consolation that I have. But when a man has a rock to stand upon like that, he does not want anything else. As long as a man has the one person necessary to his happiness to believe in him, he can put up with the ill opinion of all the others. You are to me so much that you outweigh all the world.

"I did not choose to have my secret pumped out of me by Augustus Scarborough. I can tell you the whole truth now. Mountjoy Scarborough had told me that he regarded you as affianced to him, and required me to say that I would—drop you. You know now how probable that was. He was drunk on the occasion—had made himself purposely drunk so as to get over all scruples—and attacked me with his stick. Then came a scrimmage, in which he was upset. A sober man has always the best of it." I am afraid that Harry put in that little word sober for a purpose. The opportunity of declaring that he was sober was too good to be lost. "I went away and left him, certainly not dead, nor apparently much hurt. But if I had told all this to Augustus Scarborough, your name must have come out. Now I should not mind. Now I might tell the truth about you—with great pride, if occasion required it. But I couldn't do it then. What would the world have said to two men fighting in the streets about a girl, neither of whom had a right to fight about her? That was the reason why I told an untruth—because I did not choose to fall into the trap which Augustus Scarborough had laid for me.

"If your mother will understand it all, I do not think she will object to me on that score. If she does quarrel with me, she will only be fighting the Scarborough

game, in which I am bound to oppose her. I am afraid the fact is that she prefers the Scarborough game—not because of my sins, but from auld lang syne.

“But Augustus has got hold of my uncle Prosper, and has done me a terrible injury. My uncle is a weak man, and has been predisposed against me from other circumstances. He thinks that I have neglected him, and is willing to believe anything against me. He has stopped my income—two hundred and fifty pounds a year—and is going to revenge himself on me by marrying a wife. It is too absurd, and the proposed wife is aunt of the man whom my sister is going to marry. It makes such a heap of confusion. Of course, if he becomes the father of a family, I shall be nowhere. Had I not better take to some profession? Only what shall I take to? It is almost too late for the bar. I must see you and talk over it all.

“You have commanded me not to write, and now there is a long letter! It is as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb. But when a man’s character is at stake, he feels that he must plead for it. You won’t be angry with me because I have not done all that you told me? It was absolutely necessary that I should tell you that I did not mean to ask you to break your engagement, and one word has led to all the others. There shall be only one other, which means more than all the rest—that I am yours, dearest, with all my heart.

“HARRY ANNESLEY.”

“There,” he said to himself, as he put the letter into the envelope, “she may think it too long, but I am sure she would not have been pleased had I not written at all.”

That afternoon Joshua was at the rectory, having just trotted over after business hours at the brewery because of some special word which had to be whispered to Molly, and Harry put himself in his way as he went out to get on his horse in the stable-yard. “Joshua,” he said, “I know that I owe you an apology.”

“What for?”

“You have been awfully good to me about the horses, and I have been very ungracious.”

“Not at all.”

“But I have. The truth is, I have been made thoroughly miserable by circumstances, and, when that occurs, a man cannot pick himself up all at once. It isn’t my uncle that has made me wretched. That is a kind of thing that a man has to

put up with, and I think that I can bear it as well as another. But an attack has been made upon me, which has wounded me.”

“I know all about it.”

“I don’t mind telling you, as you and Molly are going to hit it off together. There is a girl I love, and they have tried to interfere with her.”

“They haven’t succeeded?”

“No, by George! And now I’m as right as a trivet. When it came across me that she might have—might have yielded, you know—it was as though all had been over. I ought not to have suspected her.”

“But she’s all right?”

“Indeed she is. I think you’ll like her when you see her some day. If you don’t, you have the most extraordinary taste I ever knew a man to possess. How about the horse?”

“I have four, you know.”

“What a grand thing it is to be a brewer!”

“And there are two of them will carry you. The other two are not quite up to your weight.”

“You haven’t been out yet?”

“Well, no—not exactly out. The governor is the best fellow in the world, but he draws the line at cub-hunting. He says the business should be the business till November. Upon my word, I think he’s right.”

“And how many days a week after that?”

“Well, three regular. I do get an odd day with the Essex sometimes, and the governor winks.”

“The governor hunts himself as often as you.”

“Oh dear no; three a week does for the governor, and he is beginning to like frosty weather, and to hear with pleasure that one of the old horses isn’t as fit as he should be. He’s what they call training off. Good-bye, old fellow. Mind you come out on the 7th of November.”

But Harry, though he had been made happy by the letter from Florence, had still a great many troubles on his mind. His first trouble was the having to do something in reference to his uncle. It did not appear to him to be proper to accept his uncle’s decision in regard to his income without, at any rate, attempting to see Mr. Prosper. It would be as though he had taken what was done as a matter of course—as though his uncle could stop the income without leaving him any ground of com-

plaint. Of the intended marriage—if it were intended—he would say nothing. His uncle had never promised him in so many words not to marry, and there would be, he thought, something ignoble in his asking his uncle not to do that which he intended to do himself without even consulting his uncle about it. As he turned it all over in his mind he began to ask himself why his uncle should be asked to do anything for him, whereas he had never done anything for his uncle. He had been told that he was the heir, not to the uncle, but to Buston, and had gradually been taught to look upon Buston as his right—as though he had a certain indefeasible property in the acres. He now began to perceive that there was no such thing. A tacit contract had been made on his behalf, and he had declined to accept his share of the contract. But he had been debarred from following any profession by his uncle's promised allowance. He did not think that he could complain to his uncle about the proposed marriage; but he did think that he could ask a question or two as to the income.

Without saying a word to any of his own family he walked across the park, and presented himself at the front door of Buston Hall. In doing so he would not go upon the grass. He had told his father that he would not enter the park, and therefore kept himself to the road. And he had dressed himself with some little care, as a man does when he feels that he is going forth on some mission of importance. Had he intended to call on old Mr. Thoroughbury there would have been no such care. And he rang at the front door, instead of entering the house by any of the numerous side inlets with which he was well acquainted. The butler understood the ring, and put on his company-coat when he answered the bell.

"Is my uncle at home, Matthew?" he said.

"Mr. Prosper, Mr. Harry? Well, no; I can't say that he just is;" and the old man groaned, and wheezed, and looked unhappy.

"He is not often out at this time." Matthew groaned again, and wheezed more deeply, and look unhappier. "I suppose you mean to say that he has given orders that I am not to be admitted." To this the butler made no answer, but only looked woefully into the young man's face. "What is the meaning of it all, Matthew?"

"Oh, Mr. Harry, you shouldn't ask me as is merely a servant."

Harry felt the truth of this rebuke, but was not going to put up with it.

"That's all my eye, Matthew; you know all about it as well as anyone. It is so. He does not want to see me."

"I don't think he does, Mr. Harry."

"And why not? You know the whole of my family story as well as my father does, or my uncle. Why does he shut his doors against me, and send me word that he does not want to see me?"

"Well, Mr. Harry, I'm not just able to say why he does it—and you the heir. But if I was asked I should make answer that it has come along of them sermons." Then Matthew looked very serious, and bathed his head.

"I suppose so."

"That was it, Mr. Harry. We, none of us, were very fond of the sermons."

"I dare say not."

"We in the kitchen. But we was bound to have them, or we should have lost our places."

"And now I must lose my place." The butler said nothing, but his face assented. "A little hard, isn't it, Matthew? But I wish to say a few words to my uncle—not to express any regret about the sermons, but to ask what it is that he intends to do." Here Matthew shook his head very slowly. "He has given positive orders that I shall not be admitted!"

"It must be over my dead body, Mr. Harry," and he stood in the way with the door in his hand, as though intending to sacrifice himself should he be called upon to do so by the nature of the circumstances. Harry, however, did not put him to the test; but, bidding him good-bye with some little joke as to his fidelity, made his way back to the parsonage.

That night before he went to bed he wrote a letter to his uncle, as to which he said not a word to either his father, or mother, or sisters. He thought that the letter was a good letter, and would have been proud to show it; but he feared that either his father or mother would advise him not to send it, and he was ashamed to read it to Molly. He therefore sent the letter across the park the next morning by the gardener.

The letter was as follows:

"MY DEAR UNCLE,—My father has shown me your letter to him, and, of course, I feel it incumbent on me to take some notice of it. Not wishing to trouble

you with a letter I called this morning, but I was told by Matthew that you would not see me. As you have expressed yourself to my father very severely as to my conduct, I am sure you will agree with me that I ought not to let the matter pass by without making my own defence.

"You say that there was a row in the streets between Mountjoy Scarborough and myself in which he was 'left for dead.' When I left him I did not think he had been much hurt, nor have I had reason to think so since. He had attacked me, and I had simply defended myself. He had come upon me by surprise; and, when I had shaken him off, I went away. Then in a day or two he had disappeared. Had he been killed, or much hurt, the world would have heard of it; but the world simply heard that he had disappeared, which could hardly have been the case had he been much hurt.

"Then you say that I denied in conversation with Augustus Scarborough that I had seen his brother on the night in question. I did deny it. Augustus Scarborough, who was evidently well acquainted with the whole transaction, and who had, I believe, assisted his brother in disappearing, wished to learn from me what I had done, and to hide what he had done. He wished to saddle me with the disgrace of his brother's departure, and I did not choose to fall into his trap. At the moment of his asking me he knew that his brother was safe. I think that the word 'lie,' as used by you, is very severe for such an occurrence. A man is not generally held to be bound to tell everything respecting himself to the first person that shall ask him. If you will ask any man who knows the world—my father, for instance—I think you will be told that such conduct was not faulty.

"But it is at any rate necessary that I should ask you what you intend to do in reference to my future life. I am told that you intend to stop the income which I have hitherto received. Will this be considerate on your part?" (In his first copy of the letter Harry had asked whether it would be "fair," and had then changed the word for one that was milder.) "When I took my degree you yourself said that it would not be necessary that I should go into any profession, because you would allow me an income, and would then provide for me. I took your advice, in opposition to my father's, because it seemed then that I was to depend on you rather

than on him. You cannot deny that I shall have been treated hardly if I now be turned loose upon the world.

"I shall be happy to come and see you if you shall wish it, so as to save you the trouble of writing to me.—Your affectionate nephew,
HENRY ANNESLEY."

Harry might have been sure that his uncle would not see him—probably was sure when he added the last paragraph. Mr. Prosper enjoyed greatly two things: the mysticism of being invisible and the opportunity of writing a letter. Mr. Prosper had not a large correspondence, but it was laborious, and, as he thought, effective. He believed that he did know how to write a letter, and he went about it with a will. It was not probable that he would make himself common by seeing his nephew on such an occasion, or that he would omit the opportunity of spending an entire morning with pen and ink. The result was very short, but to his idea it was satisfactory.

"SIR," he began. He considered this matter very deeply; but as the entire future of his own life was concerned in it he felt that it became him to be both grave and severe.

"I have received your letter and have read it with attention. I observe that you admit that you told Mr. Augustus Scarborough a deliberate untruth. This is what the plain-speaking world, when it wishes to be understood as using the unadorned English language, which is always the language which I prefer myself, calls a lie—A LIE! I do not choose that this humble property shall fall at my death into the hands of A LIAR. Therefore I shall take steps to prevent it—which may or may not be successful.

"As such steps, whatever may be their result, are to be taken, the income—intended to prepare you for another alternative, which may possibly not now be forthcoming—will naturally now be no longer allowed.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,
PETER PROSPER."

The first effect of the letter was to produce laughter at the rectory. Harry could not but show it to his father, and in an hour or two it became known to his mother and sister, and, under an oath of secrecy, to Joshua Thoroughbury. It could not be matter of laughter when the future hopes of Miss Matilda Thoroughbury were taken into consideration. "I declare I don't know what you are all laughing about," said Kate, "except that Uncle

Peter does use such comical phrases." But Mrs. Annesley, though the most good-hearted woman in the world, was almost angry. "I don't know what you all see to laugh at in it. Peter has in his hands the power of making or marring Harry's future."

"But he hasn't," said Harry.

"Or he mayn't have," said the rector.

"It's all in the hands of the Almighty," said Mrs. Annesley, who felt herself bound to retire from the room and to take her daughter with her.

But, when they were alone, both the father and his son were very angry. "I have done with him for ever," said Harry. "Let what come what may, I will never see him or speak to him again. A 'lie,' and 'liar'! He has written those words in that way so as to salve his own conscience for the injustice he is doing. He knows that I am not a liar. He cannot understand what a liar means, or he would know that he is one himself."

"A man seldom has such knowledge as that."

"Is it not so when he stigmatises me in this way merely as an excuse to himself? He wants to be rid of me—probably because I did not sit and hear him read the sermons. Let that pass. I may have been wrong in that, and he may be justified, but because of that he cannot believe really that I have been a liar—a liar in such a determined way as to make me unfit to be his heir."

"He is a fool, Harry. That is the worst of him."

"I don't think it is the worst."

"You cannot have worse. It is dreadful to have to depend on a fool—to have to trust to a man who cannot tell wrong from right. Your uncle intends to be a good man. If it were brought home to him that he were doing a wrong he would not do it. He would not rob; he would not steal; he must not commit murder, and the rest of it. But he is a fool, and he does not know when he is doing these things."

"I will wash my hands of him."

"Yes; and he will wash his hands of you. You do not know him as I do. He has taken it into his silly head that you are the chief of sinners because you said what was not true to that man, who seems really to be the sinner, and nothing will eradicate the idea. He will go and marry that woman because he thinks that in that way he can best carry his purpose, and then he will repent at leisure. I used to

tell you that you had better listen to the sermons."

"And now I must pay for it."

"Well, my boy, it is no good crying for spilt milk. As I was saying just now there is nothing worse than a fool."

SOME OLD TRADE NOTICES.

To anyone who has the taste and opportunity, there are few more enjoyable things than turning over the pages of the newspapers of the last century. We get minute details of events which are, generally, only broadly stated; forgotten scandals wake up, and, to a student of the social life of that period, surprises meet him at every turn. An advertisement, even, may rouse the memory of things of which history takes little record, but which yet are well worth remembering. Here is an example which, on the face of it, seems only curious as forestalling the commercial interest that people of position now take in retail milk associations, and the system of sending out milk in sealed cans.

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"Milk Dairy, on a new and beneficial Plan, to commence on the first day of June next ensuing (1798), when the Milk will be sent to such Families by whom it is bespoken prior to the first of June, pure and unadulterated, in locked Tins, sealed with family Arms, so as to make it impossible for any imposition to be practised by the Milk-Carriers; Cream also may be had genuine. Milk, threepence-halfpenny a quart, to be paid for Monthly to a servant, who will be sent authorised to receive the money.

"Such families as are desirous to be supplied from the above Dairy are requested to send their address, and the quantity of Milk wanted morning and evening, directed to the Dairy Man, at the Thatched House, Old Brompton.

"Please to ring at the Coach gates."

There seems little enough in this advertisement, but what a peg it might be made on which to hang a true tale, full of startling incident! This dairy was kept, for a few months only, by Mrs. Gunning, formerly Susannah Minifie, who wrote novels in four and five volumes, after the fashion of those times. Her husband was General John Gunning, the brother of the never-to-be-forgotten "beautiful Miss Gunnings"—who, in 1751, set London society in a ferment; who could not walk in the Park,

for the crowds which assembled to view the "professional beauties;" and had to have a file of the Guards to protect them—those "goddesses the Gunnings," one of whom married the Earl of Coventry, and the other, first the Duke of Hamilton, and then the Duke of Argyll.

Here is another dairy announcement from the London Evening Post, July 2nd, 1772, which shows that more than a century ago the good folks were in advance of us in a high-sounding title for a milk-shop. Nowadays, indeed, the front of the stage is an "auditorium," and a canvas roof, as in the Albert Hall, is a "velarium," but we have yet to see—possibly we may soon see, now that it is suggested—

"THE NEW LACTARIUM,

"Near the Obelisk in St. George's Fields.

"ELIZABETH HANNEVER presents her grateful respects to the public in general, and her friends in particular, and begs leave to inform them that her new Lactarium is just finished, where Ladies and Gentlemen may be supplied with new Milk from the Cow; likewise whey fresh every day. A daily paper taken in.

"* * Syllabubs any time, if her Customers bring their own wine.

"N.B. Due Attention paid to Carriages, in which quality may sit and be supplied.

"Wine may be had next door."

The pleasures of the last century were very simple. A walk out to Tottenham Court to eat syllabubs, or to one of the other handy suburbs, was quite enough, and our ancestors enjoyed the little inexpensive treat immensely. There were plenty of places to go to, but it was not everyone who possessed a genius which could concoct such an announcement as this (1749):

"TO BE SEEN GRATIS

"At Adams's, the Royal Swan, just in the Middle of the Kingsland Road, leading from Shoreditch Church,

"The greatest Collection of your Oh Laws and Lackedazees! Oh Dears! Bless mees! Oh la! Dear mees! Heyday! Believe me! Dear la! Ods me! Hah! Ods! Look there! Aye! Eh! Hi! Oh! Umh! Well I vow! see there, now! Well a day! So they say! Well, to be sure! Nay, but there! Dear heart! For my Part! 'Pon my honour! I protest! 'Pon my word! I'm amaz'd! 'Pon my life! I'm surpriz'd! Who would think it? I'm astonish'd! Who could have thought it? Take my Word for't! I never see the like! Didn't I tell you so?

'Tis very fine! That ever any Body saw! Rais'd chiefly by present, more than Purchase, being the generous Gifts of worthy Benefactors; Daily Increasing, Hourly a Pleasing, Accounts on Sight told, and Catalogues sold.

"Note. A large quantity of Oh Jem-mines are lately arrived."

Adams's had a collection of curiosities, such as a case of butterflies, a couple of chameleons, a maze and large garden, together with the rope that hanged Captain Lowrie, and "Dr. Cameron's Legacy, his Cap, Cord, Cutter, and Bowels," surely sufficient attractions to suit all ages and tastes.

They had a very fair notion of the power of a quaint advertisement in those days—vide the following (1746):

'Tis Merry in the Hall,
When Beards wag all.—Spect.
Near Leicester Fields, in Castle Street,
Baird hangs his Sign, and sells his Meat:
At Three o'clock has daily Fare,
And keeps an Extra-Ordinaire,
Chaque Chose en saison, tout bien,
Et tout (pour Twelve-Pence) pour rien.
Each Service, serv'd En Elegance,
There's Bouillie, pour les Gens de France,
Avec la Soupe, Saute, and Maigre.
(The Goodness prov'd by swallowing eager):
Sir-loin of Beef, and Leg of Mutton,
For hearty British Blades to cut on;
For Sons of Ireland, best of Ling,
For Scotchmen, Haggace, anything;
For Wise Men, Brains, and Tongue by Halves,
And dainty veal for Essex Calves;
There's Fish and Fowl for German Bawlers;
And capon for Italian Squallers.
For Petit Maitres, Fricassees;
For honest Welchmen, toasted Cheese;
Nice Pye and Pudding for Stage Dancers,
And due Attendance to give Answers.
Allons, Messieurs, assist Beginners,
We all may mess on worse Dinners.
Dame Baird was longtime Cook at Pon's,* Sirs,
And had the Praise to please the Dons, sirs.

But, extensive as the foregoing list of good things is, it is by no means exhaustive, for, in 1753, "At the Request of several Gentlemen in and about Walthamstow. There will be a publick Dinner on Tuesday next, the ninth Instant, at Green's Ferry, Walthamstow. To be on the Table at One o'clock precisely. The Bill of Fare is as follows:

"A barbecued Pig dressed in the Barbarian Manner, six Dishes of Pond and River Fish dress'd in the New England Manner, and four Dishes of bak'd Meats in the English Manner.

"Note, the Non Subscribers are desir'd to be at the Ferry by Eleven o'clock, and pay at the Bar Two Shillings each, which

* Pon's or Ponce's was a coffee-house in Cecil Court, St. Martin's Lane.

entitles them to a Slice of High German Collar'd Venison, and a Glass of Maderia Wine from their humble servant—S. Hellyer."

But yet one more gastronomic delicacy, now unattainable, but which then was remarkably reasonable, nay, almost economical, in its price (1752): "To be killed, on Monday next, and roasted whole on Tuesday, the fourteenth Instant, at the Goat, the Corner of Whitecross Street, Old Street. A young Bear, that never was fed with anything but Milk and Bread since it came from the Dam; where all Gentlemen who will favour me with their Company, may dine for Six Pence per head, and have a Pint of Beer included, by, Gentlemen, your most humble Servant—John Allenby."

The tobacconists issued their trade announcements on the papers in which their tobacco and snuff were wrapped up, and highly interesting are these old papers. They are principally pictorial, but some of them are in type, and are curiosities in their way. Here is a specimen (1788):

"THE BEST VIRGINIA.

"Here's to pand's pen, d'A soc. i. alho—Ur.
Inh Arm (les Smirt) Hand, F, U—n,
Letfri, end Shipreig, N, B, Eju Stand kin, D.
An Devil's peak, of No N—e."

(THE PUBLICAN'S INVITATION.

Here stop and spend a social hour,
In harmless mirth and fun;
Let friendship reign, be just and kind,
And evil speak of none.)

"BEARDS TAKIN OF, AND REGISTURD!

"By Isaac Fac-Totum.

"Barber, Periwig Surgeon, Parish Clark, School Master, Blacksmith, and Man mid-wife. Shaves for a penne, cuts hare for two pense, and oyl'd and powder'd into the bargain. Young ladys genteely Edicated; Lamps lighted by the hear or Quarter. Young Gentlemen also taut there grammer langwage in the neatest maner, and great Keer takin of their morals and spelin; Also Sarme singing and horce shewing by the real Maker! Likewise makes and Mends all sorts of Butes and shoes, teches the Ho! boy and jew's harp, cuts corns, bleds and blisters On the lowest Terms; Glisters and purgis at a penne a peace. Cow-tillions and other dances taut at hoam and abroad. Also deals holesale and retale. Pirfumary in all its branchis. Sells all sorts of stationary Wair, too gether with blacking balls, Red herrins, ginger-bred and Coles, Scrubbin brushes, treycle, Mounce traps, And other sweetmetes. Likewise, Godfather's Cordal, Red Rutes, Tatoes, Sassages, and other gardin Stuff.

"P.S.—I teaches Joggrefry, and them outlandish kind of things. A Bawl on Wensdays and Frydays. All performed (God willin) By Me, Isaac Fac-Totum. To be heard of at my warehouse, Number Twenty-seven, St. John's Street, West Smithfield, Where you may be sarved with the best Tobacco by the Ream, quire, or single sheat.

"N.B.—Also, Likewise bewary of counterfeats! for such is abroad."

This is a remarkable production, but the next is almost still more odd.

"HORSES STAND IN LIVERY AND RATS DESTROYED.

"By Jeremiah Puff.

"Dealer in hold Cloas and makir of hindig-go hat his well-known new hous called the hold riginal Anggell in Tuke's Plaise, goes to Sin Talbands once a day every fortnight with his sun Job, but for shortnes we calls him Nebuchadnezzar. Hand sais I to Job, does you no Sin John Street, ho yes sais Job, sais he, then fetch me sum Bacca say I, but mind you, go to the hold shop, and Knot to the shop and parlar, So he run all the whay to the Bull at Harford, and they told him as how he was wright, but at the Bells at Broxburn they thout he was born mad. Do you understand Latin sais the landlord, ho yes says Job, I tauk it like a wild duck.

"Hold hats made new, and every hother heart tickle in the soap trade.

"By me, Jerry Puff."

Here is a sample of a delicate paragraph puff:

"On Saturday, the following conversation occurred between two sailors opposite Somerset House. 'Ah, Sam, how are you?' 'Why, Jack, when I saw you a few days ago, I was near a Gentleman, but now, through my folly, am a Complete beggar.' 'Cheer up, Sam, for you are near a Gentleman now; I have just received all my prize money and Wages; we have been partners in many a hard battle; we will be partners now. I am going to the London Sea Coal Company, in Southampton Street, Holborn, to buy a Score of Coals; and by retailing of which, I'll prove to you, there's a devilish more satisfaction and pleasure than in throwing the gold dust away on public houses.'"

Perhaps, however, this next one shows a little more refinement of treatment: "A whimsical, but perfectly good-humoured fracas took place the other day in Bond Street, between those two celebrated

Elegants and Leaders of the Ton, The Hon. Mr. — and Colonel —.

"The point at issue was, whose boots exhibited the most beautiful gloss, when neither party being inclined to yield the palm to his rival, it was agreed to adjourn to a Confectioner's, and refer the dispute to the first lady of their acquaintance that should chance to drop in. The lovely and accomplished Miss —, happening to arrive soon after, was immediately appealed to as the Umpire; who, after several attempts to decline the important commission, gave it as her opinion that the Colonel would be entitled to the pre-eminence, but that he appeared to have walked further than his companion, and consequently to have accumulated a greater quantity of dust. On hearing this, the Colonel took the lap of his coat, and, wiping his boots with it, restored them to their original polish, to the great surprise of Mr. —, who attempted to follow his example; but, not using the same composition, transplanted the blacking from his boots to his coat, which, being of a light fawn colour, was completely spoiled; a violent laugh arose, of course, at the expense of Mr. —, in which several Ladies, who had come into the shop, in the interim, most heartily joined. After diverting themselves for a considerable time at the uncouth accident, the Colonel accounted for his gaining the palm, by informing them that he used the real Japan Blacking, made by Martin and Co., and sold at Seven, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden."

Here is a metrical advertisement from the columns of the Times, June 17th, 1796:

"A Mare's to be Sold,
About six years old,
That's warranted perfectly sound,
Her height's fourteen hands
And an inch as she stands,
And will trot freely all the day round.
The Mare's to be seen
Any time that's between
The hours of twelve and of three,
At the Inn, called One Bell,
In the Strand they will tell,
Price twenty-five Guineas and three."

Naturally, the vendors of wearing apparel advertised largely, and some of their announcements are curious. A glover in Cornhill issued the following in 1791:

"To be seen, a Wonder, at J. Kettle's, Cornhill. A Nova Scotia Chicken, upwards of two hundred years old; was at Bengal six months without food or water, as the Captain will attest. The foam from it renders the brownest hand smooth and white, which Mr. K. uses for his Fawn

Skin Gloves; and they are now brought to such perfection that the world cannot equal them. Also a small Animal from Italy, that cost five hundred and four pounds there, which, for sagacity and delicacy, is past expectation."

In another advertisement, about his fawn skin gloves, he says: "Some time back Mr. Kettle made Eighty Dozen, all white, for the Queen of Portugal. Twenty dozen for her own wear, and Twenty dozen for each of the three Princesses, and he has now found out a mode of Dressing this Animal's skin, that it is whiter and more beautiful than any kid skin that is dressed with Lime; and one pair at Five Shillings is equal in wear to three of any other sort. After soiled, for Sixpence, will new dress to any colour, so that they cannot be discovered from new Gloves. Some time ago, Mr. Warren, the Perfumer, advertised Chicken Gloves, and a Mr. Somebody in Fleet Street, Vegetation Gloves. Mr. Kettle never found it possible to make a Glove of a Cabbage Leaf, etc., but that singular Animal the Fawn Skin he has, after many years' study, brought now to that perfection, that he challenges the world to equal them. In the Shop is a Painting, intended as a burlesque on those that advertise impossibilities; a Lady pointing to a young Deer, says:

"The Skin of yonder sportive Fawn,
When on a Lady's Hand is drawn,
Drest in Oil quite free from Lime,
Excel for Work, and length of time;
Nor need the high flown commendation,
Of Chinese, Chicken, Vegetation;
Those are the Gloves will stand the test,
Let merit only speak the rest."

The next advertisement hails from Portsmouth, 1790.

"Morgan, Mercer and Sea Draper. Number eighty-five, opposite the Fountain Inn, High Street. Sailors rigged compleat from stem to stern, viz., Chapeau, mapeau flying jib, and flesh bag; inner pea, outer pea, and cold defender. Up-haulers, down-treaders, fore-shoes, lacings, gaskets, etc., etc.

"With canvas bags
To hold your cags,
And chests to sit upon,
Clasp-knives your meat
To cut and eat,
When ship does lie along."

One Gavin Wilson, a shoemaker, living in the Canongate, Edinburgh, in 1789, sings in praise of his goods, and tries to prove that "there is nothing like leather."

"In these dead times, being almost idle,
He try'd and made a Leather Fiddle
Of Workmanship extremely neat,
Of tone quite true, both soft and sweet.

And finding leather not a mute,
He made a Leather German Flute,
Which played as well, and was as good
As any ever made of wood."

In 1780 a drawing-master named Austin advertised a good deal, and his notices were sometimes amusing. Here is one:

"In a short time will be published a Portrait, Etched with the Point of a Fork, by Austin of Portland Road, of Zacchariah Sharp, Cow Doctor, Tooth Drawer, Perriwig Maker, Corn Cutter, and Rat Catcher; Wholesale Dealer in Turf; Buys and Sells Old Rags, Shining black, Kitchen Stuff, Small beer, Brickdust and Honey, Lends out a Horse and Cart, Wheel barrows, Scythes, and Reap Hooks; Asses Milk and Hot Rolls and Butter every morning; cures Smoky Chimnies; sells Acorns, Faggots, Mops, Brooms and Brushes; buys Old lead and Iron honestly come by; Horse Combs and Hardware, Dealer in Hops; plays the Fiddle, Fife and Tabour; Hot Shin of Beef on Saturday evenings, Lodgings Furnished or Un Furnished; Horses and Asses taken to Grass every Midsummer Day, at tenpence halfpenny each per week. Bleeds for fourpence, and draws teeth at two shillings per dozen."

By the side of this versatile genius pales the modest handbill of "Craycraft, Salesman, Fishmonger, and Crab and Lobster Seller, Number Five, York Street, Ramsgate. Begs leave to acquaint his former Customers, Ladies and Gentlemen in general, that he cleans Boots, Shoes, Slippers, and Clogs in the Neatest Manner. Porters work done, Spring Water carried to any part of the Town and will attend when sent for, on the shortest notice."

The few examples given show that our forefathers thoroughly understood the value of advertising, and the art of doing it, and were in this matter no way behind their successors; nay, here is an advertisement which shows that we have not yet reached their standard, for, with all the various employments for women in vogue, we have not yet come to

"THE FEMALE AUCTIONEER.

"As an encouragement of female merit, and as a promoter of every laudable species of industry, as well as from a perfect knowledge of her abilities, an eminent warehouseman has engaged a real Gentlewoman to sell by auction, this present Wednesday, May 29th, at Number Eleven, Tavistock Street, a large quantity of linens," etc. Morning Post, May 29th, 1776.

A SHORT FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

I HAVE wondered much since the beginning of the late troubles in Egypt as to the probable fate of the large number of native persons who were living entirely upon the foreigner, travelling or resident; whether in the contagion of religious fanaticism they would be as merciless as the rest towards their sometime patrons; or whether, on the other hand, their having served Christians almost exclusively, and having had so many dealings with them, would render them in their turn objects of contempt and suspicion to their Mussulman friends.

As my meditations take this turn a whole procession of Cairene friends passes before my mind's eye.

There is Hassan, a very prince of donkey-boys, clean, courteous, handsome, and insinuating, who dresses frequently in silk, and speaks English so well as to make himself intelligible in it upon almost any topic. But, like all persons who speak by ear only, he does not know exactly where one word begins and another ends, and when combining original phrases of his own presents a word docked of a letter or with a letter added, which sometimes happens to be irresistibly comic to an English ear.

For instance, observing that I wished to make some drawings as remembrances of Cairo, he proposed one day to bring a camel into the court-yard, so that I might "ketch him" at my leisure. And to show me that he knew all about artists and their requirements, assured me that he had attended on an English painter who used to go out to "ketch the Bedouin in the desert."

The genders were also a difficulty. Speaking of two ladies, former kind patrons of his, he said: "You see, mem, it was Miss S—— and his sister." And on another occasion he suggested that "a girl with water on his head" would make a pretty picture, and was, in fact, a favourite subject with European artists.

Then I recall the tall form of Abdul Aziz, with his long white dress and red tarboosh with its long tassel.

He came from the Upper Nile, and had a profile so exactly like the best-drawn figures in the old Egyptian tomb-pictures that it was quite startling, and was a continual temptation to me to try and make sketches of him surreptitiously. But Abdul-Aziz, although only a waiter at an hotel,

was a stern and uncompromising person on some points. He was a quiet, patient, punctual, excellent servant, but scornfully immovable on anything that touched his religious belief, and nothing could induce him to sit for his portrait or permit the least sketch to be taken of his person if he knew it.

Abdul-Aziz was a remarkable scholar for his class in life, could read the Koran for himself, and I always heard him reading it aloud or chanting some verses to himself after he had cleaned the boots, before lying down in the oblong kind of hen-coop in which he slept in the verandah just outside my bedroom door.

Then there was Tolbah, who was my attendant for some time, a different type altogether. He was a Cairene, very short in stature, but strong and sturdy as the Cairene men pride themselves on being.

Tolbah had the peculiarity of being scrupulously honest in money matters, although, as he used to boast of it loudly, I naturally doubted the fact at first. But it was a fact. He even seemed to take pleasure in protecting his employer for the time being against the rapacity of his fellow-countrymen, and appeared quite to understand the frame of mind which makes the Briton prefer to give away two shillings rather than pay one unjustly.

This doubtless helped to inspire me with the confidence I felt that the little man would be faithful to a trust. I used to make little excursions in the neighbourhood of Cairo with no other attendant. I remember once, in a lonely rocky place, I had dismounted from my donkey to sketch, and, having walked a little way, was looking about for a place to re-mount on the broken uneven path, when he settled the question by taking me lightly by the arms and placing me in the saddle as easily and lightly as if I had been a child.

There was something in the action which made me remember how completely I was in the man's power; I believe up to that moment I had not thought of him as a man at all, but had simply the kind of feeling you have when guarded by a big dog, a protector whose loyalty could not be questioned; but all of a sudden I asked myself what was there to prevent his knocking me on the head for the sake of the money which he knew I carried, and telling the people in Cairo that I had fallen from my donkey among the rocks?

I continued to act, however, on my pro-

found conviction that he would do nothing of the kind, and never repented it; he was just as civil and as obedient to my least order when he and I and Ali (his odd boy) were trotting over the sands of Sakhara, as he would have been in the crowded Moskee street in the centre of the city. I believe my good opinion of the little man was reciprocated, indeed I could not be ignorant that certain points in my conduct met with his approbation, for he was good enough to express his approval with the quaintest air of being convinced that I should be proud of his esteem.

I remember, on the occasion of that very excursion to the Tombs of Sakhara, when I had declined with thanks the offer of some German tourists to join their luncheon-table in the rude shed where travellers rest and eat near the Pyramids, and had directed Tolbah to spread out my little repast in a quiet corner, that he came to me afterwards and said with weighty emphasis: "Now, mem, I'm very pleased with you; that woman laugh to make all men look at her; you very quiet, you eat alone, like the good Arab lady."

I observed that he used to look approvingly at the gauze veil which I always lowered on entering any of the mosques, knowing how strong is the Mahommedan feeling on that point, and he may have thought that my wearing the same thing in the desert, which I did as a protection against the sun, was due to motives equally worthy of a "good Arab lady;" be that as it may, having once taken me into favour, he seemed determined to approve whatever I said or did, and he greatly tried my gravity once by announcing with a judicial air: "Now, mem, I'm very pleased with you; you speak French very well!" He had heard me exchanging a few phrases with some friends at whose house I had been dining when he came to fetch me home.

Tolbah was blind of an eye, as are so many Egyptians; he told me his parents had put it out in his infancy to save him from the conscription. Poor Tolbah! would he consider it a meritorious action to cut my throat without pity if I fell into his hands just now? I find it very difficult to believe, but it is a curious subject for speculation.

I find myself wondering, too, what has become of the Pyramid Bedouins—the little tribe whose dwellings were near the mighty Pyramids of Ghizeh, and who lived by them, having a monopoly for showing them to travellers. Plenty of my readers,

no doubt, have had some acquaintance with them, and will remember the striking figure and manners of their sheik. What fine gentleman-like manners he had, and how well he spoke English! He could express himself also in French, German, and Italian, and although, of course, unable to read or write a word of either language, never mixed them up together. But English he spoke far the best, as did all the Pyramid Arabs. I am not going to describe the Pyramids of Ghizeh, but I may record my own impression that their steepness had been much under-rated in all the accounts I had heard of them. I had imagined the ascent to be something like going up a very gigantic flight of stairs, but it was more like going up the side of a house. I recall the mingled admiration and amusement with which I regarded Ibrahim, aged nine, who came up to me as I was resting half-way, to offer me a little water. I had been hauled and pushed up in the usual way by three sturdy Arabs, but had fatigued myself needlessly at first by trying to spring and help myself, so that I was trembling with fatigue and quite out of breath.

How this brown morsel of a child had come up alone, carrying a heavy water-bottle, I could not imagine; but there he was, encouraging me with the gravity and condescension of an ancient sheik: "Take little water, mem; not swallow, only wet your lips; very good thing."

Now, with the flight of all the Europeans the "occupation's gone" of little Ibrahim and all his tribe, and the mighty Pyramids of Ghizeh can only serve them now as an outlook, from whence to watch for the advance of Arabi's troops, or, perchance, the coming of the English. I can fancy how small a thing even an invading army would look from the top of that granite mountain, having so clearly before me the view which I had from its summit one brilliant January day. The far-stretching valley of the Nile, with the wonderful vivid green of an Egyptian spring, like a wide riband, following the course of the great river as far as eye could reach; Cairo in the distance, with its many minarets, like pin and needle points against the sky; at our feet the awful shapeless head of the Sphinx, quite dwarfed by distance, rising out of the billowy sand from among the buried tombs and temples, and away, on the other hand, the rolling range of the Libyan Hills, stretching like a sandy sea.

I have, I believe, conveyed my impres-

sion that intimate contact between the native Egyptian and the European must tend to do good, as being likely to produce a more friendly feeling on either side; but I am bound to record that the little I saw of upper-class interiors gave me a different and less agreeable impression.

In part explanation of this it must be borne in mind that the "civilisation" which the ex-Khedive Ismail Pasha attempted to introduce was exclusively French, and French surface only. It was adopted by those of the richer classes who chose to follow Court fashions merely in the form of semi-Europeanised dress, French novels, theatre-going, and increased luxury. While the respectable Mahomedan women of the middle and lower classes still go thickly-veiled, the inmates of some pasha's harem (whose head is still professedly Mahometan) may be seen driving about in glass-panelled carriages, in semi-Parisian dress, with a thin fold of white transparent stuff worn by way of a veil, which could scarcely be distinguished from the little summer veils worn in Hyde Park, but for its being drawn across the lower, instead of the upper part of the face.

Nothing more cruel or more stupid could be done by oriental men than this granting to the uneducated idle women of their households that dangerous thing, "a little knowledge" of European manners and customs, when that knowledge comprises (as it does in Egypt) all the wrong things and none of the right.

Think of the curious state of mind of a woman who cannot realise that a lady can discard her veil in the presence of strange men unless she is also prepared to discard all that a woman ought to value—an Egyptian lady told me frankly that this was her feeling—and who at the same time is permitted and encouraged by her master to learn French, to have dresses from Worth, and to receive European lady visitors. There are women of strong sense and good-feeling among them, but why should we expect them to display supernatural powers of appreciation and discernment, peeping, as they do, at our lives through the distorting medium of the key-hole? I fear there is no doubt that socially speaking, among the higher classes in Egypt, the mingling of European and Eastern customs, so far as it has hitherto been adopted, has only produced the effect which follows upon the mixture of salt water with fresh—speedy corruption.

I was invited during my stay in Cairo

to assist at the wedding of a certain Turkish pasha, whose name I do not write here for obvious reasons. He was a man of high consequence, of quiet polished manners, having a certain acquaintance with the chief capitals of Continental Europe, and speaking their languages. He was now marrying for the second time; his first wife had deceived him, but the scandal had been hushed up as far as possible, and her family being influential, she had been sent to Constantinople. I was told that he had been much attached to her, and that the discovery of her intrigue with a Christian, for which he had been caused to disappear, had been such a blow to him that it was some time before he thought of seeking other alliances.

It must be remembered that from his point of view the fact of the lover having been a Christian introduced into the affair a greatly intensified sense of disgrace and dishonour.

I afterwards saw his two little boys by his faithless wife; bright pretty children of whom he was very fond and proud. They were still in the harem, but, what struck me as being odd under all the circumstances, were being educated by a French governess. Some of my readers may perhaps think it still more strange that there are, or were, a great number of European women, chiefly French, filling similar posts in Mahomedan households.

The bride belonged to a rich and influential Turkish family living in Cairo. "Not young," I was confidentially informed—she was two-and-twenty—but pretty, clever, and highly-educated, being able to read and write and play on some musical instrument. It was even whispered that she had studied French, but I found afterwards that she certainly could not speak that language.

The wedding festivities had lasted three days, but my participation in them was limited to the third and last day, when the bride had been brought home to her husband's house, and he was entertaining all his male friends and dependents in the men's quarter of the house, while the ladies assembled in the bride's apartments. I went with a European friend resident in Cairo, and she and I were the only persons of the Western race present during the final festivities, except the French *gouvernante* aforesaid.

On alighting from our carriage we were hastily conducted across a large covered

court in which tables were spread, and hired musicians were performing, and were shown up to the women's apartments, passing through a number of narrow winding passages—it was, I was told, a real old-fashioned Turkish interior—and traversing a number of rooms furnished with a curious mixture of the splendid and the tawdry, until we came to the room where the bride sat to receive the final compliments of her friends. She was a small-framed delicate-looking person, with fairly regular features, and beautiful eyes and teeth, but the former, notwithstanding that her face was thickly painted white, showed traces of tears, and she looked, and evidently was, tired to death.

"She has been crying all day," whispered the French governess to us confidentially; "she has never seen him, of course, and has got an idea that she sha'n't like him; the fact is, she did not want to be married at all, but of course her family would not refuse — Pasha's alliance."

The new bride's apartments had been refurnished in her honour, and were bestrewn with gaudy yellow satin chairs and fauteuils, which most of the women carefully avoided, preferring to sit comfortable on the carpet, or on the lowest footstool they could find.

The bride sat like a little image on a chair raised on two steps in one corner of the room, her hands, encased in tight white kid-gloves, were crossed on her lap, and she never moved at all except that she acknowledged our courtesies, as strangers, with a slight, grave inclination of the head. The other women kept up a pretence that it was all very delightful, and occasionally stroked her dress smilingly in passing, or rearranged the heavy gold fringes of her veil. She had put off a magnificent bridal dress of white satin on entering the house of this husband whom she "had never seen," and was now arrayed in pink satin heavily embroidered with gold, having on her head a veil of tulle and gold ornamented with flowers and diamonds, while large diamond brooches and bracelets glittered on her dress and wrists. The long train of her dress, made in European fashion, was spread ostentatiously half across the floor. Those of her relations who had come with her were also very smart and very modern. Her sister, in addition to a pair of high-heeled shoes, had advanced to the civilised length of wearing tight stays. But the attendants and women of the household were the most curiously mixed lot I

ever saw. Some wore Turkish trousers and dresses of common muslin; and others, who wore silk, and had splendid jewels in their ears and flowers in their head-dresses, had their gowns tucked up behind for greater convenience in running about, and one saw their stockingless legs bare to the calf. One buxom negress wore some really fine brilliants in her ears and on her fingers.

In another room I saw a Circassian girl, who from her hair and complexion might have been English, with beautiful grey eyes and dark lashes, who was plainly dressed. It seemed probable that these oddly-distributed jewels were signs of the master's favour rather than the mistress's, which did not tend to heighten the cheerfulness of this so-called marriage from a European point of view.

I was glad to escape from the sight of the bride's pale weary little face, and go and see what was going on elsewhere.

I was presented to the mother of the bridegroom—a most curious type. Everything in her apartments was of the ancien régime. It was one of the real old-fashioned Turkish harems—no chairs, no French gilt clocks and looking-glasses. Beautiful old carved woodwork in the moosharabeas (projecting latticed windows); fine dark carpets; cool, lofty, whitewashed walls; comfortable low billowy divans ranged all round the room, with little pipe-stands and low tables for coffee, comprised nearly all the furniture of the immense central room.

The mother sat on a low divan surrounded by richly-dressed ladies, the wives of other pashas who had come to pay their compliments. She was far the plainest and shabbiest of the party, but there was no mistaking who was mistress there. A slave stood at her elbow, watching her least movement, and everybody treated her with deference, to which she responded with a grave dignity which was not impaired by her odd appearance, although she was more like a little old man than a little old woman. I thought to myself: "Well, if they sacrificed you as a bride, you have certainly vindicated your rights since, and have taken it out of somebody."

In the course of the evening the pasha came up to see his mother, for whom he had a great affection, and of course all the strange women were bundled out of sight; some of them standing behind curtains and peeping through doors which gave upon the passages which he must traverse. Wherever the latticed windows

gave upon the courtyard, there the principal guests clustered thickly, and almost fought for places.

These ladies were nearly all persons of position, splendidly dressed, most of them in shapeless baggy garments of costly materials and brilliant hues, in some cases beginning as if they meant to be oriental, and then trailing off into long trains. The jewels were positively dazzling. The wife—or a wife—of Shereef Pasha, who was present, wore a girdle four inches in depth entirely studded with diamonds, emeralds, and rubies. But they had forgotten even their jewels for the time; they had eyes and ears for nothing but what was passing in the court below.

There were several strangers and foreigners among the pasha's guests, and these poor women evidently thought they were "seeing life" from between the bars of their cage. Those who could not get near the windows, eat sweatmeats, sipped coffee, and smoked innumerable cigarettes. I noticed that the grandest ladies had each her own servant in attendance, with a bag of special cigarettes, of which they lit immense quantities, throwing them aside after a whiff or two, until they had quite a pile on the table nearest them. I supposed that these might be the perquisite of the servants of the house. Suddenly there came a stir from below.

"The bridegroom's procession is being formed with torches and lanterns; he is going away."

"Going away?" said I in some astonishment.

"Yes, to the mosque. He is a very good Mussulman. He is going to pray, then his friends will re-accompany him to the door and leave him."

It was time that we went away too, but for some while the carriage could not be found, and when we finally descended the steps to the court-yard, we met the pasha coming up them with his attendants carrying torches.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

VIII.

LULL'D were the winds on Innismore,
And green Loch Aline's woodland shore.

And the maid of Lorn is wide-awake and seated by my side on the paddle-box of the steamer Islay, with the morning sunshine flashing over the hills of Morven, and gilding the bold mountains of Mull on the opposite shore. But Mary Grant

disclaims the title of maid of Lorn; if anything, she is maid of Morven, for Long Ashpan lies on the other side of the Morven hills, on the shores of Loch Linnhe, the loch that stretches away behind us towards Ben Nevis. "And I think," adds Mary Grant archly, "it will be Jennie who is the maid of Lorn, for the Gillies came from the opposite shore, by Loch Etive; and," turning to a paper-covered copy of *The Lord of the Isles* that was lying in her lap, "it was Ronald, you know, who was after the maid of Lorn." "Or rather, if memory serves, it was the maid of Lorn who was after him. Well, the parallel is more complete." Mary looks at me reproachfully, but with a blink of sympathy in her eye. "I'm afraid you're a little bit jealous," she said softly; "but look! yonder is Artonish."

Artonish on her frowning steep
Twixt cloud and ocean hung.

It had been a charming sail thus far from Oban, a fine tide running through the sound and up the lochs, the sea sparkling and foaming as it seemed in pure joyfulness and effervescence of spirits. The steamer's wake was all a radiant track; and each stroke of the paddles was marked in sparkling lines of bubbles. Jennie had placed herself on a camp-stool by her mother's side, in the fore-part of the poop-deck, and seemed to be immersed in a novel, although she bestowed a sweeping glance every now and then upon Mary and me, seated confidentially together on the paddle-box. And Uncle Jock was fast asleep on a bench in the shade, and I devoutly hoped that his slumbers may continue; for I know that Mary feels bound by ties of gratitude to give him her society whenever he wants her, and so one has hardly a chance of talking to the girl, except at such odd times as this.

But now there is a boat in sight, coming out of the dazzle of sunshine as we head up Loch Aline—with a very broad circumflex over the "a," if you please, or spelt as pronounced, Loch Awlin—a stout sea-going boat, pulled by four sturdy Highlanders, who give way with a will. And a boat always excites the interest of the people on board, who scan the coming guests through their glasses from the paddle-boxes, or cluster about the gangway to watch the arrivals and departures. And there is always an element of uncertainty and expectation; out of that boat, with its load of portmanteaux, and crew of wild-looking boatmen, may come on board a friend last met on the hot flagstones of

Piccadilly. Sometimes it is a stout farmer or a cattle-drover, with a minister from the manse, or perhaps a City stockbroker, or a Glasgow merchant, or two or three fair daughters of the land. But this time there is only one sitter in the boat, and that a man clad in the garb of old Gael. The rowers wave him cordial but respectful adieux as he springs up the ladder; his boxes are hauled on board, and away we go once more.

Now this must be the Macmicalister himself, I whisper to Mary, for such an image of an Highland chief I have never before set eyes on. In his bonnet the silver badge, his crest; his sporran, with its three massive silver spokes, and the crest repeated; in his right stocking a jewelled dirk; and a pair of sturdy limbs above, tawny with the dye of sun and storm. Then his kilt is the tartan of his clan, with the short jacket above, and the fair sunburnt face. Yes, decidedly this is the Macmicalister. "Oh, hush!" whispers Mary, with a faint blush; "I know him. It is young Lochspiel."

Lochspiel was making a kind of royal progress through the boat. He was hailed by two or three weather-beaten drovers, who carried him away to look at a small herd of Highland cattle tethered in the fore-part of the boat—cattle which he knowingly handled, looking over them with the critical air of a connoisseur. And then the meenister hailed him to talk about some repairs to the kirk, and then he has a word with two or three grey-coated farmers.

"But oh! unseen for three long years,
Dear was the garb of mountaineers
To the fair maid of Lorn."

I quote this maliciously from Mary's paper-covered book, for the girl is following Lochspiel about with her eyes, as if he were a prince of royal blood. Is it something in the air of savage wildness that makes one feel homicidically inclined this sweet peaceful morning? I declare I wish I too had a knife tucked away inside my right stocking, that I might dare this proud young chieftain to single combat. And then he recognises Mary Grant, and doffs his bonnet, and comes over to speak to her, and from that moment the girl has eyes and ears for nobody else. I listen for awhile to their talk of people and places, of Macs and lochs without end, and then take refuge with Jennie, who has been too much engrossed with her novel to notice what is going on. But Mrs. Gillies has caught sight of the young hero. "Dear me,

there is Lochspiel. I wonder if he will remember us. Jennie, run and waken your uncle, and tell him that Lochspiel is on board." And so I retire into the background till I hear a soft voice at my elbow: "Will you lend me your glass, please! for we are just coming to Salen." It is Mary Grant, whose chieftain is now pacing the deck with Uncle Jock. "Is he going to Skye, too?" I ask, darkly indicating Lochspiel. "I don't think so," replied Mary. "No doubt he is going to see Dunapegan, whose daughter he's going to marry." "Upon my word he is a very fine young fellow!" I exclaim enthusiastically.

By this time we are abreast of Salen Pier, in Mull, quite a massive erection of wooden piles, with a tub mounted on a long pole as leading mark; the village, a few scattered houses, lying behind in a recess among stern and gloomy hills. As for castles, each commanding headland seems to have its ruin, the eyrie of some robber chieftain, warrior, husbandman, pirate, as might happen. And presently we steam into the land-locked bay of Tobermory, the very jewel of Mull, with the richly-wooded shore, and bright pellucid basin, about which is a margin of brown basaltic rock, showing a yellow rim all round where the tide frets and chafes. And the sweet little town lies under the hill, and the harbour below is whitened with the sails of half-a-dozen yachts that have just left their moorings, and away for a morning cruise, while a venerable tub with loosely hanging sails that hails from the land of Erin is all shadow and blackness. Another steamer is lying at the pier taking in cargo: cattle for the south and big boxes of salmon: and altogether there is an atmosphere of life and pleasant bustle about the little port. Over on the other side is a fine mansion half-hidden by trees, and below a little creek where a taper mast or two show over the rocks.

And here once upon a time lay the Florida, escaped from the fire-ships of Drake, and the storms of Cape Wrath—the Florida that carried an admiral's flag they say in the great Spanish Armada. The reigning Mac—Dougal, or otherwise—set fire to the ship—not, perhaps, that he had any particular animosity against the Spaniard, but that it was the custom of the Highlanders to burn anything they could neither eat, drink, nor carry away. And so she burnt to the water's edge and then sank. And ever since there have been traditions of great treasure sunk in

the placid bay; though I fancy the Macs might have been trusted not to miss anything of that kind. But some time in the reign of James the First, of England, the reigning Campbell, Earl of Argyle, got a license from the Crown to search in the bay, but got nothing except some brass guns—at least, if he got anything else he kept it to himself—and I am told that the present Marquis of Lorne conducted diving operations in the bay, to try for relics of the Armada, but found nothing of interest.

"It is a pleasant land this of Ardnamurchan," cries Lochspiel as we are once more steaming up the sound; "a pleasant land, but wanting in shelter." He eyes the land with a questioning glance, as if he were speculating as to whether it were worth while to raise his clan, invade the country, and take possession, after making a great slaughter of the present inhabitants. Perhaps he may be hardly conscious of the sentiment, but there it is plainly expressed in his eye, which becomes round and dilated, like the lion's when he sees a particularly fat boy or toothsome young woman through the bars of his cage. After this it is perhaps a little startling to find that Lochspiel is going to a meeting of the school-board. For they have school-boards up in the Highlands, and Lochspiel assures his interlocutor that it takes him about a week to attend each meeting and get back again; but that includes other meetings of a more hospitable character probably. I should like to see that gathering of kilted chiefs. Do they bang their dirks into the table before them, and sit each of them watching his fellow member's right hand? They have a happy way of punishing recalcitrants. If a cottar won't send his children to school, they clap an extra pound or two on the rent.

But this land of Ardnamurchan ends in a long low headland with a tall lighthouse marking the point, and though not so generally known as Land's End or Cape Wrath, it has its own claim to distinction. For it is the very westernmost point of the mainland of Scotland, and indeed of Great Britain. And if some airy spirit could be trained to flash along a parallel of latitude, it would have to dart from Ardnamurchan Point to the coast of Labrador without finding a morsel of land to rest upon by the way.

And thus as we leave the Sound of Mull we find ourselves in the immediate presence of the mighty Atlantic. Hitherto we have been sheltered by a breakwater of

innumerable islands, and although upon salt water, have sailed as it were upon a tranquil lake. And now though there is only a fairy breeze that a nut-shell might put to sea in, yet still there is a restless uneasy movement beneath, reminding one of the mighty power that is now quietly sleeping. And the tall lighthouse, and the bare polished rocks, savage and repelling, seem to speak of winter storms and the full impact of mighty Atlantic surges.

And the islands in our track, Muick and Eigg and Rum, are no fair-weather islands, green and smiling, but grey and grim, with high mountain-peaks and a stern weathered look, as if they held their advanced posts with difficulty against the wild ocean. A race, bold and stout, fearless seamen and tough mountaineers, it must be to inhabit such rugged storm-beaten isles. But alas! the race is no more. The story has yet to be told of the migration of these brave islanders. Whether they yielded to the mysterious impulse that drives the race ever westward, tired of the life-long battle with the rude forces of Nature, or whether they were driven out by harsh landlords and one-sided laws, it boots not here to enquire. Anyhow they went, the men of Muick, and Rum, and Eigg—the men and women, the grey-headed patriarchs, the children and babes in arms.

Muick is still uninhabited, but the other islands have been repeopled from the neighbouring shores. And from Eigg puts out a boat, and the steamer heaves to as it approaches. An hotel lies there in a fissure among the rocks, and above towers a monstrous basaltic rock known as the Scur of Eigg, in shape like the antediluvian mammoth; while along the shore, a dark crevice in the rocks is pointed out as the entrance to a cave ever memorable for the barbarous vengeance of the Macleods, who destroyed all the then inhabitants of the island, who had taken refuge in the cave; filling its mouth with brushwood, and then setting fire to the mass. The island did not long remain unpeopled, and it was these comparatively modern settlers who emigrated in a body to America, and thus the present inhabitants are the third in succession within almost recent times.

And now opening out from behind Rum we catch a glimpse of Canna, a barren lonely island, to which attaches something of mystery and marvel. For Canna is the loadstone mountain of the northern seas, and it is said that passing vessels find their

compasses useless, even though the iron bolts remain firm, and the ship fails to tumble to pieces. And here, too, attaches a legend of a Spanish lady, captive to some rude Highland chieftain—perhaps taken from some shipwrecked vessel belonging to the Armada. But no willing captive this, and sadly bearing the yoke of her alien lord. And Mary Grant hunts out Scott's metrical version of the legend:

And oft when moon on ocean slept,
That lovely lady aate and wept
Upon the castle wall,
And touched her lute by fits and sung
Wild ditties in her native tongue.

While even now her spirit is said to haunt the place of its former captivity.

Upon the lone Hebridean's ear
Steals a strange pleasure mixed with fear,
While from that cliff he seems to hear
The murmur of a lute.

Opposite Eigg the steamer suddenly heads for a little loch, the entrance to which might easily be overlooked among the surrounding rocks. A very foul entrance, the sailors call it, but very fair indeed as far as appearance goes, studded with sharp jagged rocks with a wonderful tangle of seaweed about them of lovely rainbow hues, while the sea, where it shoals among the rocks, assumes all kinds of varying tints of a tender green. And now the anchor is cleared, and as we are among the very thick of the rocks, the word is given to let go, and the anchor dives down with a loud roar, and the chain rattles out. It is a wild and lonely loch, and it is difficult to make out what we want here, for there is not a house in sight, and the only sign of life is an old coasting brig lying in a little creek surrounded by ravenous-looking sharks' teeth in the way of rocks. But presently two boats appear from nowhere, one a smart yacht's boat, with two brown handsome girls pulling among the crew, and the other the regular ferry-boat with an odd passenger. It seems that somewhere in the recesses of the rocks there lies a little inn, which has a name all to itself—Arisaig—and from Arisaig a new coach-route has just been opened over the hills by Loch Shiel and Lochail to Banavie at the entrance to the Caledonian Canal. A good alternative route, as the scenery is said to be grand. It was about this country, wild and savage enough in all conscience, that bonnie Prince Charlie was in hiding so long, after Culloden.

The yacht's boat has taken on board a dainty old lady, whom the brown girls salute as mother, with a lot of hampers

and packages, and they are now darting away towards their invisible haven under the hill. And the big lifeboat is moving too at a more leisurely pace, and before you can say Jack Robinson, the steam capstan has whipped up the anchor and we are once more on the broad Atlantic. We are in full sight now of Skye, with the grand Cuchullin range towering over the headlands—over that long headland of Sleat, that seems to hang in hand such a time. But once behind the point of Sleat, and we are in perfectly smooth water again; and in Armadale Bay all is wild luxuriance and brightness and perfect calm. Two or three boats are lying there with people fishing, and long nets are stretched from stakes for the benefit of the lordly salmon, while in the pleasant little creek a taper-masted yacht is at anchor. On the hill above is Armadale Castle, the seat of the Macdonalds, the lineal descendants of the Lords of the Isles. But why Armadale? it is asked. What has such a Scandinavian title to do with the Celtic Skye? But there are sundry dales about here, and the vikings of Norway have left their mark, while many of the chief Hebridean families have distinctly a Scandinavian origin. Like the Macleods of Dunvegan, on the other side of the island, whose ancestors Walter Scott describes as swearing

By Woden wild, my grandsires' oath, and bearing in mind the massacre of Eigg by a Macleod, something of its barbarity may be attributed to the ruthless northern blood. Our Lochspiel now, thorough Highlander as he considers himself, is as blonde and blue-eyed as the most genuine "Sawxon." But, indeed, the black Highlanders, the dark-haired, dark-eyed Celts, seem to be altogether vanished from these parts. The red-men, the big red-haired variety, seem to have altogether supplanted them.

After Armadale, the brightness of the day departs for a time, and Loch Hourn, with its gloomy recesses and savage Ben Screel in the distance, looks the very abode of cloud and storm. But the threatening comes to nothing, and by the time we reach the Bay of Glenelg the sun is shining again. And Glenelg shows some sign of fertility, with a sandy margin all round, suggesting pleasant dips into the lovely clear water. There are ruined barracks here, the roofs all fallen in, but the walls holding up stoutly, all brown and weather-stained. The barracks were built after the Forty-five, to keep the Highlanders in

check, and secure the passes between the coast and the line of forts that then girdled the Highlands, along the line now taken by the Caledonian Canal. One can't be expected to grow sentimental over a ruined barrack; but there is a dead-and-gone feeling about the place that is rather melancholy.

And then the scene changes as we run into the narrows, with charming Balmacara looking so fresh and engaging that I should jump into the boat alongside and end the voyage then and there if other people had not to be considered. And then we churn through a narrow passage with a ruined castle on one hand and a lighthouse on the other, and the mountains of Skye rising behind. Across this narrow strait, it is said, the Danish princess who built the castle would stretch a chain and demand toll from every passing ship. And here is Kyleakin on a little jutting point, with the fishermen's thatched cottages and little green patches behind them, and a red cow surveying us calmly from the point, where an artist is at work under his Crusoe-like umbrella.

A wonderful change has come over Jennie Gillies, an annoying development of spryness. Her novel cast aside, she displays a remarkable interest in the scenery, and scrutinises every boat and yacht we pass with the binoculars. And then a boat stands out from a little inlet—a boat with two men rowing, one of whom flourishes a letter in the air. The steamer slackens speed, and the boat is presently alongside, and the letter handed up. And the purser, who is a smart young fellow with an amazing tenderness for the other sex, singles out Jennie and hands her the letter with a most gracious reverence. Jennie reads with flushing cheeks, and nods once or twice gently to herself, while Uncle Jock looks at the young woman in a little mystification. "I didn't know you had friends in Skye, Jennie," he ventured. "And I was not quite sure of it either," replied Jennie, "till I got this letter."

Presently the strait opens out into a broad sound, and behind us stretches Loch Carron, with Stromes Ferry station on its southern shore—a station of the Highland Railway, and there goes the ferry steamer racing us for Portree. But I can't make out the station through the glasses—nor Miss Grant neither; and I should so like to catch sight of an engine-shed, while the aspect of a white curl of steam from a locomotive would be

perfectly lovely, for I feel as if we had been for about a month cut off from the world of civilisation. But instead, we have the driving shower and following gleam of sunshine flitting across a lonely isle. And then a boat puts out from Broadford, and a considerable number of passengers get ready to leave the ship, so that the boat is crowded with people and heaped up with luggage, and bobs up and down rather helplessly in the water. But the boat is of the life-boat order, and will bear a good load, and we leave our late passengers to dance about in the swell, and hurry on our way northwards.

"It is all right," said Jennie, finding me in a quiet corner. "Ronald is at Sligachan hard at work, but he is coming over to Portree to-morrow to meet his uncle and somebody else, and for the kirk as well, of course."

But Broadford is very taking as we pass by in the evening sunlight, with its green slopes and little crofters' cottages and neat white inn, and an air of comfort and cultivation. And leaving Broadford behind the scenery becomes more grand and sterile, with glimpses of stern precipices and gloomy corries; and we wind between two large islands, both of them marked with green patches, where once the hand of man was busy, but all now returning to its original wildness. On one of the islands, it is said, the ground is so steep and rocky, rising sheer out of the sea, that the inhabitants, to prevent their children from falling overboard, were in the habit of tethering their children to the trees. There are no trees there now, nor children, and the rocky terraces are occupied by herds of white goats, who bound about fearlessly from point to point. And now we open out Loch Sligachan, winding in among huge blocks of mountains. And there inside is lying a little yacht that Jennie makes out to be the Firefly, belonging to Ronald's friend.

And now we round into Portree Harbour, passing into cool and pleasant shadow; the little land-locked bay, the white houses rising in terraces on the hill-side—an air of pleasant snugness about the place. The ferry steamer has got in before us, and is noisily blowing off her steam, and a little knot of people are gathered on the quay to watch the landing. "Twill be a nice quiet place for the Saw-bith," says Uncle Jock with an approving nod, as "boots" pile our luggage on his truck and bowls away in front of us with

much volunteer help from bare-legged Skyrians. And a little dog barks vehemently at us—positively a Skye-terrier.

A PLEASANT CHANGE.

A STORY OF THE COUNTRY.

THROUGH the whole season I had run unintermittingly the round of second-rate gaiety and excitement.

When I say second-rate, I must not be understood to impugn the social status of those friends and acquaintances who had been making life agreeable to me during these past months, I only mean that though we all clung stoutly to the fond delusion that we were at least linked to the upper ten, if not actually belonging to it, we were second-rate in so far that it did not behove us to make our bows and curtsies to the Queen at regular intervals, and Marlborough House had never been graced by our presence.

But for all this we were very fashionable in our way, and believed ourselves to be quite one of the best sets in town. We did not own drags, but were occasionally invited to drive on them, or lunch on them at Lord's. We did not attend levées and drawing-rooms, but we knew people who did these things, and so were apt to speak in an off-hand way of these court ceremonials with a view of impressing those who did not know that our familiarity with them was second-hand. Our absence from Sandown, Ascot, the private view at the Academy, or any of "the dear duchess's" balls, would not have been noticeable facts. "The world" wouldn't have wondered if we were not present at Patti's or Nilsson's first night, or last night, or whichever night "the world" elected to think the most of.

Nevertheless, after freely admitting that we did not stand on these perilous heights, I still am justified in avowing that we ran society's weary round as indefatigably, fatiguingly, and feverishly as if we had been the highest in the land.

I was very tired. For several years I had been as sick of second-rate shams as if I hadn't been one myself; sick of the ceaseless strife and endeavour to keep the ball rolling in a way that should give onlookers the impression that it rolled easily, and this though no one knew better than I did that in the busy mart no one has time to pause and look on at the labours of his fellows.

But it was over at last, and a

charming, energetic, exhaustingly good-hearted friend who had been staying with me through the season's dying agonies, decided for me that "a pleasant change" to her house, in one of the prettiest villages in Surrey, was the one thing needful.

"And I'll try to repay you for all the pleasure you've given me, dear," she said with grateful enthusiasm. And though my heart misgave me as to the form her gratitude would take, I smiled in hope and faith, and compelled myself to believe the best.

Now the pleasures I had given Mrs. Rodney during the moribund days of the season were, to say the least, dubious. I had taken her to three or four evening-at-homes, where people were so disgusted at seeing one another still in London that they all said their flattest speeches, and let themselves look as faded and bored as they felt. I had sat with her through interminable concerts and plays, which she enjoyed so keenly that she set my teeth on edge with envy of her unfaded taste. And I had given a dinner in her honour, at which she knew no one, had neither knowledge of nor interest in any of the topics introduced, and was shocked out of all appetite by hearing a sweet-looking woman languidly let fall sundry libellous statements respecting our hostess of the previous night, who happened to be the constant and most intimate companion of the aforesaid sweet-looking woman.

I only fervently hoped that Mrs. Rodney would not reward me in my own coin.

My longing for rest and peace, for the rest and peace that is only to be had in a pure atmosphere, under green trees by rippling streams, was no fictitious thing.

Head and heart were alike weary, the one from over-work, the other from ever-recurring disappointment at the small result of that work. I wanted quiet, and freedom, and monotony of a certain kind. And I fondly told myself that I should find all these in my friend's pretty, well-ordered house in a lovely Surrey valley.

I gathered encouragement and took heart from every word she uttered on our way down from town.

"London society is very false and shallow, after all, Georgie," she said pensively as we steamed away into the country. "What I felt when that horrid Mrs. Marlborough slandered the woman who believes in her false professions of friendship so openly as she did at your table last night, I shall never forget."

"Mrs. Denbigh says exactly the same things of Mrs. Marlborough, in all probability," I answered, and Mrs. Rodney shook her head in melancholy reproof, and said she feared I had "become tainted with the heartless worldliness and perfidiousness of those by whom I had so long been surrounded."

I cordially forgave her every unkind suspicion she might entertain of me when we reached The Fishery, as her pretty home on the banks of the Thames was called. Her victoria and pair of ponies had met us at the station, and, a little to my disappointment—for I was in the mood for rural simplicity being carried out in every detail—I found them as well-appointed as anything I had seen in the Park during the season.

"I hoped you had not got beyond a village-cart and a rough pony. I was looking forward to prowls upon wheels through your flowery-hedged lanes, but there's nothing suggestive of loitering about these cobs of yours," I said, as the little cobs pulled with a vigour that was very much like running away.

"Perhaps you thought to find red-brick floors in my house, and no other society than slugs and earwigs in the garden; but I've prepared a pleasant little surprise for you," she said as we whisked round a corner from the road into the miniature drive which led up to The Fishery.

A surprise she had prepared for me, and no mistake! It remained to be seen whether or not it was a pleasant one.

About thirty people—twenty-five of whom were ladies—were congregated on the lawn, which was bordered by beds wherein flowers were made to represent Persian carpets as much as possible. Young women and girls, in the artistic guise of the modern tennis-player, were standing and sitting about, eating fruit and sipping Russian tea and iced coffee, just as I had left them doing at Hurlingham.

"I thought it would be so dull for you unless I had some people to meet you," she said triumphantly, "so I wired to Arthur to arrange a garden-party for to-day by way of making you welcome."

"Thanks," I said grimly; and I added to myself: "Anyhow, they'll soon go, and we shall dine in peace."

"Get rid of your travelling-wraps as soon as possible," she whispered; "and do come out in something that will make that detestable Mrs. Carnaby feel a little out of conceit with her harmonies in copper-red."

Look at her, Georgie! Do just look at the airs she is giving herself! We shall have dancing presently," my hostess went on eagerly. "Ices and fruit will go on all the evening, and at ten we shall have a banquet. I'm so glad the rain is keeping off. It would have been so dull for you if we hadn't managed this."

I was longing for quiet; I was wearying for a book, and pining to put my feet up on a chair and dawdle over sympathetic pages with the knowledge that no one would speak to me and that I needn't speak to any one for the next two hours. Instead of this I had to unpack and dress afresh, and go down to a lawful of people whom I neither knew nor wanted to know; and to undergo a number of introductions, and to seem pleased and gratified when in reality I was in a state of inanition from boredom and hunger.

We had left London before the ordinary luncheon-hour, and now I swallowed tea and ices and fruit until my digestion suffered. Then the dancing commenced, and, as nothing would have induced me to tax my tired feet on the turf, I was told off to the piano, which was dragged forward to the window in order that the dancers might now and then catch a note.

A belt of fine Scotch pines surrounded the grounds, and about nine o'clock (a full hour before the banquet) the wind began to whistle ominously through these trees, and presently a slashing downpour drove every one incontinently into the house. This was awkward, for the drawing-room was not large, and three of the families socially assembled were at feud, as I found out afterwards.

"This is your first visit to The Fishery, I understand?" Lady Harleck said suavely.

"It is," I answered, and hoped we had come to a conversational no-thoroughfare. But I did injustice to Lady Harleck's powers of resource.

"I hope you will like Bluefleet." Bluefleet was the name of the village.

"The scenery is lovely," I said.

"Ah yes, to be sure; the scenery is quite what one could wish; but I was speaking of the society."

"I am sure, judging from what I see to-night, that is everything that one could desire," I said, with an emphasis that I hoped might crush the topic. But Lady Harleck was more than a match for me.

She elevated her fat shoulders and fatter hands, and murmured:

"My dear Mrs. Colville, you must not

look upon this as a typical Bluefleet social gathering. Dear Mrs. Rodney does her best, I will say that for her, but even I must admit that she makes sad mistakes."

"Ah, indeed!" I said vaguely.

"Yes, indeed; and since you press me to tell you, I will, though of course I rely upon you for its not going any further. She has that Mrs. Carnaby here."

"Mrs. Carnaby is that pretty woman in copper-colour, isn't she?" I interrupted.

"She's the one in flaming red. As for her being pretty, she's not my style, while as for her manners—— But there, I never breathe a word against anyone. I only know this, the sooner Captain Carnaby comes back from India the better."

"Her husband is in India, is he?" I asked.

"Yes; as if any respectable woman would remain in England while her husband was sweltering to death under a burning sun, and losing his liver."

"My husband is in India also," I remarked, and Lady Harleck was instantly seized with the desire to point her daughters out to me.

"Sir Benjamin and I have brought our treasures up in strict retirement, but though I am their mother, I must say I think they shine here to-night," she said, waving her hand in the direction of a group of girls, whose ages ranged from eighteen to thirty.

"Your daughters are—which are your daughters?" I said, and she replied:

"All seven of them. I have been fortunate enough to keep the home-circle unbroken as yet, but I fear I shall not keep my wayside flowers unplucked much longer. They are so sweet, so confiding, so trustful. Really, as Captain Carnaby used to say before he met that horrid woman, to know them is to love them. Pretty idea, wasn't it?"

"Yes," I assented, "so fresh and un-hackneyed."

"Exactly; he was quite devoted to Maria—that's Maria with the wild roses in her hat—and at one time I quite thought my child would have been tempted to leave her happy home to follow a stranger; but that bold daring woman, who is now his wife, came to stay with some people in the neighbourhood, and some way or other she managed to trap him."

"Sad indeed," I murmured, though I didn't know what was sad, or why it was sad. Still, as I was obviously expected to say something, I said that, and then tried to slink out of Lady Harleck's vicinity.

But her ladyship liked a new listener, and so held me fast.

"As you say, Mrs. Colville, that woman's conduct is deplorable; but what can I do to show her in her right colours, and put her in her right place? If I were to cut her, the ill-natured world would declare that I was spiteful on Maria's account. Mrs. Rodney swears by Mrs. Carnaby, and, really, sometimes I hesitate to say it, but since you ask me, I must say there is scarcely a pin to choose between the imprudence of the two."

At this moment supper was announced, and Lady Harleck, in her zeal for the welfare of her seven, forgot me, and suffered me to escape. Fortune, in her trickiest mood, planted me by Mrs. Carnaby.

"I see you have been talking to Lady Harleck?" she began. "Pleasant woman, isn't she?"

"Remarkably so," I assented briefly.

"And 'Maria' is such a charming, sweet, unsophisticated girl, isn't she?"

"I don't think I've seen her yet," I said.

"Oh, but I am sure Lady Harleck has not left you so long in ignorance of Maria's charms and bewitching qualities," pretty Mrs. Carnaby went on in such soft tones, and with such an angelic smile on her really lovely face, that I was in momentary doubt as to whether she was in sober earnest, or only spiteful.

"She spoke of her daughters generally," I replied, and then I weakly added something to the effect of her being "evidently a most affectionate mother."

"Ah, I see! She has been expressing the devout gratitude she feels to Providence for having been allowed to keep her sweet home-circle unbroken by marriage yet; she told me that when I came to Bluefleet first, and I really thought it very kind and considerate of her to say it, as dear unsophisticated Maria had done her best to catch Captain Carnaby before he met me."

"You in your strength can afford to be generous to all such attempts and failures," I remarked, and she laughed and replied:

"Yes; they amuse me hugely though, especially now that maternal gratitude is rampant on the subject of the unbroken home-circle."

The festivities of that evening came to an end at last, and I retired to a temple of cleanliness and freshness, and, as I snuggled down between the sheets, I congratulated myself on having got through the local gaiety at such an early stage of my visit. Soothed by this reflection I slept soundly,

and went down to breakfast the next morning with a light heart.

It was a deliciously fresh and fragrant repast. The eggs were laid by Mrs. Rodney's own hens; the honey was supplied by her own bees; the cream and butter were contributed by her own cows; luscious grapes and peaches were from her own vinery and peach-house; and the flowers were from her own garden.

"How happy I should be living in such a home as this, on the fruits of my own land," I said enthusiastically.

"Would you?" she exclaimed with a discouraging shrug of the shoulders. "The place is all very well, I admit, but if Arthur would only be guided by me——"

"Which he never will be," he put in placidly, but she went on as if he had not spoken:

"He would sell The Fishery, and go where we should have decent society; it's too deadly here for words to describe. Now the only prospect of amusement I have to offer you is a lunch at Lady Harleck's to-morrow; and her luncheons are about as overpowering forms of pleasure as you can indulge in for your sins."

"Don't let us go," I cried; "make some excuse."

"Indeed, no; I can't do that, for she has asked a lot of people to meet you, she told me so last night; besides, I know Mrs. Carnaby is going to wear a dress that's a perfect dream, and I want to take a hint from it. Don't you like Mrs. Carnaby? isn't she a dear creature? so full of good-nature and consideration. She offered me the pattern of her dress last night in the heartiest way, and told me Lady Harleck was just dying to get it for Maria."

"And she will lend the pattern to Lady Harleck, of course?" I said timidly.

I was beginning to feel timid and ill at ease among these dear kind people, who battled with such unrelenting force for such uncommonly small ends.

"Indeed, she will not lend the pattern to Lady Harleck," Mrs. Rodney said, with her head in the air. "For my part, I wouldn't wear the dress if Maria Harleck had a duplicate of it, and the Harlecks are all so ill-natured about pretty Mrs. Carnaby, calling her a flirt."

"Are there any men to flirt with here? I thought the thing itself had died out, and with it the effete race who kept it alive," I said stupidly, for the littleness of most things was beginning to affect me.

"Have they died out, indeed?" Mrs.

Rodney said, in fine contempt of me; and then, with the vision of the pattern of that dream-like dress well before her, she went on: "You should see them crowding round Mrs. Carnaby. You'll see to-morrow every-one will be struggling to get near her. She is one of the sweetest creatures, and I don't care what anyone says about her. Lady Harleck hates her because she wanted Captain Carnaby for her precious Maria; but Lady Harleck would cease giving her ill-managed little luncheons if Mrs. Carnaby declined to appear at them."

"This is indeed peace and a pleasant change," I murmured to myself as I listened to the altered sentiments of my agreeable little hostess.

In all gratitude, let me proclaim that I spent the morning hours of that day delightfully. I got myself away at some distance from the house, and planted myself on a lawn-chair at the end of a long alley that was bordered by sunflowers, white lilies, hollyhocks, and other old-fashioned garden pets. Here I sat reading a novel and lapsing into a lazy state that was infinitely healthy and stultifying.

I disregarded the luncheon-bell, knowing well where to find peaches and grapes should the pangs of hunger or thirst assail me. Meantime, until they did assail me, the sunflowers and lilies were enough.

I was loitering through the last pages of my book when I heard my name called by Mrs. Rodney, and presently, before I could make up my mind as to the propriety of hiding away from her she came upon me in full tennis costume, a mallet on her shoulder, and two young men at her heels.

"We have been hunting for you everywhere, Georgie," she said reproachfully. "It's half-past five now, but we can get a game before dinner if you come at once."

"I can't play; I don't like tennis," I said weakly, forgetting that Mrs. Rodney had a habit of overthrowing ill-founded prejudice on all occasions.

"Oh, nonsense," she said. "You'll like it when once you get into it. You can't think how deliciously fatiguing it is till you try."

"I have had plenty of fatigue in town during the last six months. I don't think my figure is exactly suited to tennis, either," I added reluctantly, for I had lost the sylph-like proportions of youth.

"Oh, never mind that," she said encouragingly. "But you'll be wanted at Lady Harleck's to-morrow, to play in a scratch game, so it's just as well you should practise beforehand."

I yielded to her. It was easier to do that than to oppose her. But I went to bed that night with pains in every limb, and with a bad sick headache. There was balm in Gilead for me in these sufferings, though. They might be accepted as excuses for my non-appearance at Lady Harleck's luncheon on the morrow.

Nothing of the kind. When I broached the subject of my ailments, Mrs. Rodney was ready with a host of remedies, any one of which would have been worse even than the luncheon.

It ended in my going to Lady Harleck's entertainment.

Lady Harleck lived in a good-sized comfortable house, that was handsomely furnished with the necessaries of life, but was not interesting to look upon. Her walls were unadorned, save by portraits of herself and her husband, the good Sir Benjamin, who gave one the impression of never having got over his amazement at being knighted. Everything about their household arrangements was plenteous, solid, and plain, and I was congratulating myself on having come into a house where unpretentiousness reigned, when Lady Harleck sailed alongside of me as we came from the luncheon-table, and said:

"We have treated you quite as one of ourselves, Mrs. Colville; received you in the manner in which we are accustomed to live. My daughters suggested that we should follow the fashion of the day, and give you a light and æsthetic repast; but I said no! Baronial simplicity, combined with baronial plenty, is what I have always aimed at, and what without undue self-gratulation I may say I have always succeeded in carrying out. I have strong ideas on the subject of its being everyone's duty to adjust him or herself into the niche for which nature designed us. Sir Benjamin has entirely coincided with me in this, and the result is that we remain representatives of the baronial system in these days of revived Queen Anne-ism. I am sure your taste approves of my decision and determination, Mrs. Colville."

"Entirely," I said promptly, for she was muscular and tall, and had a trick of rearing as she talked, which made me shrink from and succumb to her.

"My physique marks me out for the baronial style," she went on: "large, grand, rugged, true! These were the characteristics of the baronial system, Mrs. Colville."

"I have no doubt of it," I assented.

"You display your usual acumen in

discerning this truth," she said enthusiastically. "I am very staunch on the point of its being desirable for all women to make a study of 'style,' and shape themselves to the period to which they aptly belong. As I have already explained, I am baronial. Now, Maria, as you may have observed—my darling, sweet 'Rie,' as her friends call her—is distinctly classical. A classic lily, one of her many admirers has sweetly termed her in a little volume of poems. Do you happen to have met with them? 'A Wallet Full of Weeds,' he has prettily entitled them, and the sonnet addressed to Maria he calls, 'To Chickweed.' So original, isn't it? He is one of the boys whose genius I have watched and nurtured, and I confess I feel proud of his felicitous expression. 'Chickweed' so exactly symbolises my Rie. There is something about it which is bright, green, useful, simple, and at the same time striking. I am sure you, with your cultivated sense of the fitness of things, will agree with me, my dear Mrs. Colville, 'Chickweed' is an appropriate cognomen for my guileless Rie."

"I am sure it is," I said hurriedly, though my thoughts were wandering far from the baronial lady's talk.

"Yet I cannot encourage him to the extent I would wish," the good lady went on sadly. "He has genius, but he is beyond the age in which he lives. Debt does not trammel his spirit for a moment. 'If I can't find dross to pay for what I've had in one place, I go to another, and try my luck there, dear Lady Harleck,' he says to me, and in front of that bold daring spirit I can't preach cautiousness. There he is; look at him, lying on the grass at—yes, at that odious Mrs. Carnaby's feet."

I looked in the direction which she indicated, and saw stretched upon the lawn in an elaborately easy attitude, which to me was suggestive of discomfort and dislocation, a pallid young man with lengthy hair, a bilious mien, and—yes, undeniably a very expressive face.

Mrs. Carnaby was lounging in a swing, and he was lolling on the grass before her. But languid as were their respective attitudes, her words had a stimulating power about them.

As I drew near I heard her say: "What did you tell me? that 'Wallowing in Weeds' was your final effort? Be ashamed of yourself at once, get up, and promise to try and do something better, something manlier and more sensible."

"The poet is born, not made, Mrs. Carnaby; I am the toy of my muse."

"I pity your muse for having such a badly-working toy," the lady laughed contemptuously. "I haven't read many of your poems, but the few I have read are full of the effrontery of imitation. And you know it yourself, quite well."

With this she descended from her swing and walked away, leaving her companion to the soothing influence of Lady Harleck, who bore down upon him at the moment.

"My dear boy," Lady Harleck began in her largest manner, "I see how that woman's flippancy disgusts you; a brainless beauty as she is, all men of sense speedily tire of her. As my dear Rie says in her artless way: 'Mamma, I would not have Mrs. Carnaby's face for worlds, unless I had a soul, an intellect to match it.'"

"Mrs. Carnaby's intellect is about the best I've met with down here," the "dear boy" replied ungratefully. "The worst thing about her is her sharp tongue; but she takes the sting out of what she says with her lovely looks."

"I always think the best, and hope for the best," the representative of the baronial style said magnanimously; "therefore I hope you are right in supposing that the worst thing about Mrs. Carnaby is her 'sharp tongue.' But, as dear Mrs. Colville was saying, only a day or two ago, 'Mrs. Carnaby's conduct can only be described by the word deplorable.'"

"Lady Harleck, I really think it was you yourself who applied that term to her conduct, of which I know nothing, and about which I care less," I said hastily. But Lady Harleck only laughed good-humouredly and asked me if I was afraid of an action for libel.

"For my own part I fear neither man, woman, nor the law to the extent of closing my lips about conduct that I cannot shut my eyes to," she said heroically. "It pains me more than I can express to be compelled to censure anyone; but if I am compelled to do it, I do not meanly try to evade the consequences of the expression of my opinion."

She looked out of the corners of her eyes at me as she said this, and then she pranced away, leaving me feeling remarkably uncomfortable and irate. Had I come down to the country for fresh air, peace, and quiet for this end, that I was to be lugged into a little local quarrel between people for whom I did not care to the amount of the oft-quoted brass-farthing?

Rendered rather desperate by this

reflection, I sought Mrs. Rodney, and asked her "if an invitation to luncheon in Bluefleet meant that the guests were to remain for the rest of the day?"

"No, indeed," she said promptly; "this is the only house in the neighbourhood where you're kept lagging on long after you wish to get away; but Lady Harleck likes to get rid of all her social obligations at one clean sweep, so she makes us stay for afternoon-tea when we lunch here, and then she has the audacity to put in the local papers: 'Lady Harleck entertained a large party at luncheon on Thursday, and afterwards received a number of guests at a garden-party!' Such disgusting pretentiousness, isn't it, Georgie?"

"Oh, I don't know," I said, for my two days' experience of the way my remarks were edited in Bluefleet was making me more careful in my utterances than I had ever been before.

Just at this moment I saw the bard, the sweet singer of Chickweed—about whom I was beginning to entertain a higher opinion since he had said his say about Mrs. Carnaby—summoned by a wave from that lady's sun-shade.

Out of mere idleness I watched their meeting and consultation. Being out of ear-shot I heard none of their remarks. Had I done so I should probably have been rather less indifferent than was the case.

It afterwards transpired that the sensible and amiable little lady had called the poet in order to ascertain from him what I—wretched I—really had said about her, as she had been given to understand that I had denounced her conduct as "deplorable," and herself as "disreputable," chiefly because her husband was in India, and she was happy nevertheless.

I believe the author of Chickweed represented my poor sayings to her faithfully, for her wrath against me subsided as he spoke.

But the representative of the baronial system had not done with me yet. Before we got away, she sought me, and said:

"I am such a peaceful person myself that I quite shrink from the contemplation of Mrs. Carnaby's aggressive way of carrying on social tactics. If you can believe it, she is trying to make a fuss about some innocent remarks you have unadvisedly let drop about her. I have

been assuring her that you didn't speak them in malice——"

"I haven't spoken them at all, Lady Harleck," I interrupted.

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Colville! surely you cannot forget that you have said rather strong things against our volatile—yes, I grant her volatile—friend; but I am sure you have meant no harm by your animadversions; in fact, deeply attached as I am to Mrs. Carnaby, it has rather been a source of satisfaction to me to find that you are brave enough to give her a hint as to her indiscretions."

"I am not aware that she has committed any, and as far as I am concerned, she might commit fifty thousand without calling forth a remark from me," I said hotly.

My mood was not balmy that night. I felt that I was in a perilous place, between these well-meaning but far too talkative women.

For the next week or ten days life at The Fishery was very renovating. Then came a shock. A lawyer's letter called me to account for having declared Mrs. Carnaby's conduct to be deplorable in the absence of her husband in India! Also for having asserted that "Mrs. Carnaby was not a respectable woman, a fact which I declared I had ascertained from my husband, who was serving with her husband in India."

The shock was really and truly a great one, for I was as innocent of having spoken a word, or thought a thought, against Mrs. Carnaby as I was of having attempted treasonable practices against the Queen. But happily just at this juncture a telegram from my husband reached me, saying he and his "friend Carnaby were leaving for England by the next mail."

This intimation brought about an interview between Mrs. Carnaby and myself, in which I contrived without incriminating others to exonerate myself. But though I escaped on this occasion, my experience at Bluefleet has given me a profound distaste for "pleasant changes."

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXVI. MARMADUKE LODGE.

ON the seventh of next month two things occurred, each of great importance. Hunting commenced in the Puckeridge country, and Harry with that famous mare *Belladonna* was there. And Squire Prosper was driven in his carriage into Buntingford, and made his offer with all due formality to Miss Thoroughbury. The whole household, including Matthew, and the cook, and the coachman, and the boy, and the two housemaids, knew what he was going to do. It would be difficult to say how they knew, because he was a man who never told anything. He was the last man in England who, on such a matter, would have made a confidant of his butler. He never spoke to a servant about matters unconnected with their service. He considered that to do so would be altogether against his dignity. Nevertheless when he ordered his carriage, which he did not do very frequently at this time of the year, when the horses were wanted on the farm—and of which he gave twenty-four hours' notice to all the persons concerned; and when early in the morning he ordered that his Sunday suit should be prepared for wearing, and when his aspect grew more and more serious as the hour drew nigh, it was well understood by them all that he was going to make the offer that day.

He was both proud and fearful as to the thing to be done—proud that he, the Squire of Buston, should be called on to take so important a step; proud by anticipation of his feelings as he would return home a jolly thriving wooer—and yet a little fearful lest he might not succeed.

Were he to fail the failure would be horrible to him. He knew that every man and woman about the place would know all about it. Among the secrets of the family there was a story, never now mentioned, of his having done the same thing once before. He was then a young man, about twenty-five, and he had come forth to lay himself and Buston at the feet of a baronet's daughter who lived some twenty-five miles off. She was very beautiful and was said to have a fitting dower; but he had come back—and had shut himself up in the house for a week afterwards. To no human ears had he ever since spoken of his interview with Miss Courteney. The doings of that day had been wrapped in impenetrable darkness. But all Buston and the neighbouring parishes had known that Miss Courteney had refused him. Since that day he had never gone forth again on such a mission.

There were those who said of him that his love had been so deep and enduring that he had never got the better of it. Miss Courteney had been married to a much grander lover, and had been taken off to splendid circles. But he had never mentioned her name. That story of his abiding love was thoroughly believed by his sister, who used to tell it of him to his credit when at the rectory the rector would declare him to be a fool. But the rector used to say that he was dumb from pride, or that he could not bear to have it known that he had failed at anything. At any rate he had never again attempted love, and had formally declared to his sister that, as he did not intend to marry, Harry should be regarded as his son. Then at last had come the fellowship, and he had been proud of his heir, thinking that in some way he had won the fellowship himself, as he had paid the bills. But now

all was altered, and he was to go forth to his wooing again.

There had been a rumour about the country that he was already accepted; but such was not the case. He had never even asked. He had fluttered about Buntingford, thinking of it; but he had never put the question. To his thinking, it would not have been becoming to do so without some ceremony. Buston was not to be made away with during the turnings of a quadrille or as a part of an ordinary conversation. It was not probable, nay, it was impossible, that he should mention the subject to anyone; but still he must visibly prepare for it, and I think that he was aware that the world around him knew what he was about.

And the Thoroughburies knew, and Miss Matilda Thoroughbury knew well. All Buntingford knew. In those old days in which he had sought the hand of the baronet's daughter, the baronet's daughter and the baronet's wife, and the baronet himself, had known what was coming, though Mr. Prosper thought that the secret dwelt alone in his own bosom. Nor did he dream now that Harry and Harry's father, and Harry's mother and sisters, had all laughed at the conspicuous gravity of his threat. It was the general feeling on the subject which made the rumour current that the deed had been done. But when he came downstairs with one new grey kid-glove on, and the other dangling in his hand, nothing had been done.

"Drive to Buntingford," said the squire.

"Yes, sir," said Matthew, the door of the carriage in his hand.

"To Marmaduke Lodge."

"Yes, sir." Then Matthew told the coachman, who had heard the instructions very plainly, and knew them before he had heard them. The squire threw himself back in the carriage, and applied himself to wondering how he should do the deed. He had, in truth, barely studied the words; but not, finally, the manner of delivering them. With his bare hand up to his eyes so that he might hold the glove unsoiled in the other, he devoted his intellect to the task; nor did he withdraw his hand till the carriage turned in at the gate. The drive up to the door of Marmaduke Lodge was very short, and he had barely time to arrange his waistcoat and his whiskers before the carriage stood still. He was soon told that Miss Thoroughbury was at home, and within

a moment he found himself absolutely standing on the carpet in her presence.

Report had dealt unkindly with Miss Thoroughbury in the matter of her age. Report always does deal unkindly with unmarried young women who have ceased to be girls. There is an idea that they will wish to make themselves out to be younger than they are, and therefore report always makes them older. She had been called forty-five, and even fifty. Her exact age at this moment was forty-two, and as Mr. Prosper was only fifty there was no discrepancy in the marriage. He would have been young-looking for his age, but for an air of ancient dandyism which had grown upon him. He was somewhat dry, too, and skinny, with high cheek-bones and large dull eyes. But he was clean, and grave, and orderly—a man promising well to a lady on the look-out for a husband. Miss Thoroughbury was fat, fair, and forty to the letter, and she had a just measure of her own good looks, of which she was not unconscious. But she was specially conscious of twenty-five thousand pounds, the possession of which had hitherto stood in the way of her search after a husband. It was said commonly about Buntingford that she looked too high, seeing that she was only a Thoroughbury and had no more than twenty-five thousand pounds.

But Miss Tickle was in the room, and might have been said to be in the way, were it not that a little temporary relief was felt by Mr. Prosper to be a comfort. Miss Tickle was at any rate twenty years older than Miss Thoroughbury, and was of all slaves at the same time the humblest and the most irritating. She never asked for anything, but was always painting the picture of her own deserts. "I hope I have the pleasure of seeing Miss Tickle quite well," said the squire as soon as he had paid his first compliments to the lady of his love.

"Thank you, Mr. Prosper; pretty well. My anxiety is all for Matilda." Matilda had been Matilda to her since she had been a little girl, and Miss Tickle was not going now to drop the advantage which the old intimacy gave her.

"I trust there is no cause for it."

"Well, I'm not so sure. She coughed a little last night, and would not eat her supper. We always do have a little supper. A despatched crab it was; and when she would not eat it I knew there was something wrong."

"Nonsense! what a fuss you make. Well, Mr. Prosper, have you seen your nephew yet?"

"No, Miss Thoroughbury; nor do I intend to see him. The young man has disgraced himself."

"Dear, dear; how sad!"

"Young men do disgrace themselves, I fear, very often," said Miss Tickle.

"We won't talk about it, if you please, because it is a family affair."

"Oh no," said Miss Thoroughbury.

"At least, not as yet. It may be—but never mind, I would not wish to be premature in anything."

"I am always telling Matilda so. She is so impulsive. But as you may have matters of business, Mr. Prosper, on which to speak to Miss Thoroughbury, I will retire."

"It is very thoughtful on your part, Miss Tickle."

Then Miss Tickle retired, from which it may be surmised that the probable circumstances of the interview had been already discussed between the ladies. Mr. Prosper drew a long breath, and sighed audibly, as soon as he was alone with the object of his affections. He wondered whether men were ever bright and jolly in such circumstances. He sighed again, and then he began: "Miss Thoroughbury!"

"Mr. Prosper!"

All the prepared words had flown from his memory. He could not even bethink himself how he ought to begin. And, unfortunately, so much must depend upon manner! But the property was unembarrassed, and Miss Thoroughbury thought it probable that she might be allowed to do what she would with her own money. She had turned it all over to the right and to the left, and she was quite minded to accept him. With this view she had told Miss Tickle to leave the room, and she now felt that she was bound to give the gentleman what help might be in her power. "Oh, Miss Thoroughbury!" he said.

"Mr. Prosper, you and I are such good friends, that—that—that——"

"Yes, indeed. You can have no more true friend than I am. Not even Miss Tickle."

"Oh, bother Miss Tickle; Miss Tickle is very well."

"Exactly so. Miss Tickle is very well; a most estimable person."

"We'll leave her alone just at present."

"Yes, certainly. We had better leave her alone in our present conversation."

Not but what I have a strong regard for her." Mr. Prosper had surely not thought of the opening he might be giving as to a future career for Miss Tickle by such an assertion.

"So have I for the matter of that, but we'll drop her just now." Then she paused, but he paused also. "You have come over to Buntingford to-day probably in order that you might congratulate them at the brewery on the marriage with one of your family." Then Mr. Prosper frowned, but she did not care for his frowning. "It will not be a bad match for the young lady, as Joshua is fairly steady, and the brewery is worth money."

"I could have wished him a better brother-in-law," said the lover, who was taken away from the consideration of his love by the allusion to the Annesleys. He had thought of all that, and in the dearth of fitting objects of affection had resolved to endure the drawback of the connection. But it had for a while weighed very seriously with him, so that had the twenty-five thousand pounds been twenty thousand pounds, he might have taken himself to Miss Puffie who lived near Saffron Walden, and who would own Smickham Manor when her father died. The property was said to be involved, and Miss Puffie was certainly forty-eight. As an heir was the great desideratum, he had resolved that Matilda Thoroughbury should be the lady in spite of the evils attending the new connection. He did feel that in throwing over Harry he would have to abandon all the Annesleys, and to draw a line between himself with Miss Thoroughbury and the whole family of the Thoroughburys generally.

"You mustn't be too bitter against poor Molly," said Miss Thoroughbury.

Mr. Prosper did not like to be called bitter, and in spite of the importance of the occasion, could not but show that he did not like it. "I don't think that we need talk about it."

"Oh dear no. Kate and Miss Tickle need neither of them be talked about." Mr. Prosper disliked all familiarity, and especially that of being laughed at, but Miss Thoroughbury did laugh. So he drew himself up, and dangled his glove more slowly than before. "Then you were not going on to congratulate them at the brewery?"

"Certainly not."

"I did not know."

"My purpose carries me no farther than

Marmaduke Lodge. I have no desire to see anyone to-day besides Miss Thoroughbury."

"That is a compliment."

Then his memory suddenly brought back to him one of his composed sentences. "In beholding Miss Thoroughbury I behold her on whom I hope I may depend for all the future happiness of my life." He did feel that it had come in the right place. It had been intended to be said immediately after her acceptance of him. But it did very well where it was. It expressed, as he assured himself, the feelings of his heart, and must draw from her some declaration of hers.

"Goodness gracious me, Mr. Prosper!"

This sort of coyness was to have been expected, and he therefore continued with another portion of his prepared words, which now came glibly enough to him. But it was a previous portion. It was all the same to Miss Thoroughbury, as it declared plainly the gentleman's intention. "If I can induce you to listen to me favourably, I shall say of myself that I am the happiest gentleman in Hertfordshire."

"Oh, Mr. Prosper!"

"My purpose is to lay at your feet my hand, my heart, and the lands of Buston." Here he was again going backwards, but it did not much matter now in what sequence the words were said. The offer had been thoroughly completed and was thoroughly understood.

"A lady, Mr. Prosper, has to think of these things," said Miss Thoroughbury.

"Of course I would not wish to hurry you prematurely to any declaration of your affections."

"But there are other considerations, Mr. Prosper. You know about my property?"

"Nothing particularly. It has not been a matter of consideration with me." This he said with some slight air of offence. He was a gentleman; whereas Miss Thoroughbury was hardly a lady. Matter of consideration her money of course had been. How should he not consider it? But he was aware that he ought not to rush on that subject, but should leave it to the arrangement of lawyers, expressing his own views through her own lawyer. To her it was the thing of most importance, and she had no feelings which induced her to be silent on a matter so near to her. She rushed.

"But it has to be considered, Mr. Prosper. It is all my own, and comes to very nearly one thousand a year. I think

it is nine hundred and seventy-two pounds six shillings and eightpence. Of course, when there is so much money it would have to be tied up somehow." Mr. Prosper was undoubtedly disgusted, and if he could have receded at this moment would have transferred his affections to Miss Puffie. "Of course you understand that."

She had not accepted him as yet, nor said a word of her regard for him. All that went, it seemed, as a matter of no importance whatever. He had been standing for the last few minutes, and now he remained standing and looking at her. They were both silent, so that he was obliged to speak. "I understand that between a lady and gentleman so circumstanced there should be a settlement."

"Just so."

"I also have some property," said Mr. Prosper with a touch of pride in his tone.

"Of course you have. Goodness gracious me! Why else would you come. You have got Buston, which I suppose is two thousand a year. At any rate it has that name. But it isn't your own?"

"Not my own?"

"Well, no. You couldn't leave it to your widow, so that she might give it to any one she pleased when you were gone." Here the gentleman frowned very darkly, and thought that after all Miss Puffie would be the woman for him. "All that has to be considered, and it makes Buston not exactly your own. If I were to have a daughter she wouldn't have it."

"No, not a daughter," said Mr. Prosper, still wondering at the thorough knowledge of the business in hand displayed by the lady.

"Oh, if it were to be a son, that would be all right, and then my money would go to the younger children, divided equally between the boys and girls." Mr. Prosper shook his head as he found himself suddenly provided with so plentiful and thriving a family. "That, I suppose, would be the way of the settlement, together with a certain income out of Buston set apart for my use. It ought to be considered that I should have to provide a house to live in. This belongs to my brother, and I pay him forty pounds a year for it. It should be something better than this."

"My dear Miss Thoroughbury, the lawyer would do all that." There did come upon him an idea that she, with her aptitude for business, would not be altogether a bad helpmate.

"The lawyers are very well; but in a transaction of this kind there is nothing like the principals understanding each other. Young women are always robbed when their money is left altogether to the gentlemen."

"Robbed!"

"Don't suppose I mean you, Mr. Prosper; and the robbery I mean is not considered disgraceful at all. The gentlemen I mean are the fathers and the brothers, and the uncles and the lawyers. And they intend to do right after the custom of their fathers and uncles. But woman's rights are coming up."

"I hate woman's rights."

"Nevertheless they are coming up. A young woman doesn't get taken in as she used to do. I don't mean any offence, you know." This was said in reply to Mr. Prosper's repeated frown. "Since woman's rights have come up a young woman is better able to fight her own battle."

Mr. Prosper was willing to admit that Miss Thoroughbury was fair, but she was fat also, and at least forty. There was hardly need that she should refer so often to her own unprotected youth. "I should like to have the spending of my own income, Mr. Prosper—that's a fact."

"Oh, indeed."

"Yes, I should. I shouldn't care to have to go to my husband if I wanted to buy a pair of stockings."

"An allowance, I should say."

"And that should be my own income."

"Nothing to go to the house?"

"Oh yes. There might be certain things which I might agree to pay for. A pair of ponies I should like."

"I always keep a carriage and a pair of horses."

"But the ponies would be my look-out. I shouldn't mind paying for my own maid, and the champagne, and my clothes, of course, and the fishmonger's bill. There would be Miss Tickle, too. You said you would like Miss Tickle. I should have to pay for her. That would be about enough, I think."

Mr. Prosper was thoroughly disgusted; but when he left Marmaduke Lodge he had not said a word as to withdrawing from his offer. She declared that she would put her terms into writing and give them to her lawyer, who would communicate with Mr. Grey. Mr. Prosper was surprised to find that she knew the name of his lawyer, who was in truth our old friend. And then, while he was still hesitating, she

astounded—nay, shocked him—by her mode of ending the conference. She got up, and throwing her arms round his neck, kissed him most affectionately. After that there was no retreating for Mr. Prosper, no immediate mode of retreat, at all events. He could only back out of the room, and get into his carriage, and be carried home as quickly as possible.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

IX.

To go to bed in broad daylight, and, waking from the first doze, to see the hills faintly touched with the blush of dawn—such is night in Skye in the short but brilliant summer of these high latitudes. And now it is Sunday morning. A profound stillness everywhere—the stillness of a Scotch Sabbath. Even the cocks don't crow nor do the hens cluck, as far as one can hear, and the old colley, who is the first to greet me on coming down, has a subdued and thoughtful expression on his honest face. I am not the first down, however. A shrewd dogmatic-looking Scotchman is already seated on the bench outside the hotel, and in reply to my greeting of "A fine morning," replies cautiously: "Yes, it's fine eno", but I'm dootful about its lasting." Perhaps, indeed, there is a sort of tenderness in the morning light that presages a certain tearfulness later on. But at the present moment the sun is shining brightly over Raasay Island, while the long ripples of the incoming tide are spread in dark lines ever hurrying onwards in endless succession. The little town is at our feet, and the harbour with the massive headlands that mount guard over the entrance.

I have a kind of presentiment that the shrewd-looking Scot is no other than the hard-shelled uncle of whom Ronald has been writing. He is busy now over his order-book, and is turning over the leaves with a frowning thoughtful brow. Presently he shuts up his book with a snap, and fills and lights a pipe in a leisurely careful manner. His brow is unbent, and he looks even sociably disposed, and I feel that I ought to begin to make friends with him, but having ventured that little remark about the fine morning I don't feel as if I had got another subject handy. However, at last I hazard another remark to the effect that we had not seen him on our arrival last night. "And wass you wanting to see me?" asked the old carle rather

suspiciously. Oh, not at all, only that we missed the pleasure of making his acquaintance, and so on. "Well, to tell ye the truth," began the Scot, "I was over there by Scavaig. Perhaps ye'll be in the timber-line your own self?" with a renewed access of caution and mistrust. No, I had nothing to do with timber. If I had, what should I be doing in the Highlands, where you may find materials for a birch rod, indeed, or even a broom or two, and maybe a walking-stick with a fine crook at the end of it, but as for timber—well!

Mr. Ross, for that was his name—Angus Ross, hailing from Inverness, and Ronald's uncle as it turned out—Mr. Ross, laughed good-humouredly at my depreciation of the native timber. He could afford to laugh, as it turned out, for he dealt in Norway deals himself; and it strikes me as curious that while the hills of Norway, the shores of its inlets and fiords, are clothed with timber which supplies half the world with planks and battens, the coast of Scotland, under similar climatic conditions and with a, perhaps, more favourable arrangement of land and water, should remain as bare as the palm of your hand.

But to return to Mr. Ross, who has lighted his pipe and is puffing away vigorously—a performance which does not impair in any way his parts of speech. Indeed, the short periods, pointed by puffs of tobacco-smoke, are exactly suited to his conversational powers.

"Aye, it's a fine morn, as ye were saying, and to look at yon bay that's sae smooth and pleasant now, ye'd never think of how it looks in winter-time, with maybe a stiff nor'-east gale sending the swell down the sound, and the waves lashing up against yon headlands, and roaring up into the air with clouds of foam and torrents of white surf nigh up to the top of yon rugged cliff."

The picture made me shiver involuntarily, and Ross laughed low, and almost choked himself with tobacco-smoke, pleased with the effect of his eloquence. And then, finding he had an appreciative listener, he began a description of his winter journey among the islands—a voyage, say, from Shetland to the Orcades in a howling winter's gale; but presently diverged in a lamentable way to the account of a trial on which he served as a jurymen, and the remarks he made to the court, and how Lord Muddylaws tried to put him down, and the reply he made by which Muddy-

laws was covered with confusion. We were fairly in the middle of the trial, with no prospect of an agreement as to the verdict, when the two girls came out, Mary Grant and Jennie; and old Ross, whom nothing else could have moved to spare one word of the long-winded trial, broke off with the apology, "Mon, ye shall hear it all from the verra beginnin', when we're just to oor twa selves," and made his politest reverence to the two girls.

I think Jennie knew by some subtle instinct that this was the all-important uncle whom it was her business to conciliate, she received his old-fashioned gallantries with such sweetness. And then somebody proposed a short walk to the top of an eminence close by, whence there is a general view of sea and coast, and Mary Grant fell to my share, while Angus and Jennie walked off together, highly pleased with each other. At the top of the hill is a little ruined tower that gave rise to some speculation; it is not ancient exactly, but yet not built yesterday. Ross suggested that it was a whisky-tower, a trysting-place for the great drinking-bouts that were the main pastime of the smaller Hebridean chiefs. Or perhaps it is just a gazebo, built by some eccentric with a passion for panoramic views. A fine sweep of sea and sky and rough rock-bound coast; the cliffs breaking off suddenly into the abyss are clothed with luxuriant vegetation, and spangled with the blossoms of the wild rose, while fox-gloves and a host of other wild flowers riot luxuriantly in all the crevices of the rocks. "We'll have a fine appetite for breakfast, anyhow," said Angus; but, as far as the girls were concerned, I doubt whether the effect was quite realised, for coming back to the hotel, we met Uncle Jock in something of a temper. "D'ye think it seemly, lassies, to be walking and daffing here on the Sabbath morn?" and he hurried them in with quite unnecessary haste. Angus Ross made a face indicative of strong disgust. "If there's one thing more than another I've a contempt for, it's beegotry; and there's more than enough of it among us." It was suggested that the climate must have something to do with it, for that Jock Gillies is not nearly so rigid a disciplinarian when among the Gallios of the metropolis. But the fact was, Uncle Jock had discovered the presence of the young artist on the island, and considered himself as much aggrieved thereby. And he considered your humble servant as much to blame as

anybody, and consequently, when the gong sounded for breakfast, he seated himself and his party as far away as he could. All but Jennie, that is, who broke away and took her seat between the old timber-dealer and myself.

Now if Jennie had done this with the profoundest calculation, instead of at the impulse of the moment, she could not have made a better impression on Angus Ross. The old fellow was delighted. As for Mary she gave me one laughing glance out of her blue eyes that made my heart give quite a sudden leap. There is nothing like being in disgrace together to give people a sympathetic feeling for each other.

Sunday morning brings all the denizens of the hotel together, for if you don't come to the public breakfast you have to go without; such is the simple inexorable law. And consequently all the honeymooners were present. And Skye it seems is a great place of resort for the newly-married. It might be thought that they would be glad of the opportunity of seeing a few fresh faces. But no, they seemed still wrapped up in each other, and exchanged little signals of endearment and conveyed loving messages by symbolic arrangements of teaspoons and scones. There was an Irish family, too, with three unmarried daughters, who perhaps had the taste of sour grapes in the mouth as they watched the happy play of the dainty little brides; but perhaps again they were superior to that kind of thing altogether. There was a little apprehension among the guests as to future supplies of food, for notice was given that except for the table d'hôte dinner at half-past five, no other meal would be served. But the head waiter soothed all alarms. "Oh, ye shall have your lunches, never fear." "Just a biscuit, you know; if it were only a biscuit," suggested the Irishman. "But ye shall have your plentiful lunches," replied the waiter, "never fear for that." "Well, I'm glad to find there's no that beegotry among us all," said Mr. Ross aggressively, with a glance at Uncle Jock. "There's nothing more repugnant to a mind that's capable o' reasoning powers, than that blind beegotry that'll no' allow men their lawful enjoyments because it's the Sawbeth. Ye mustn't walk except to kirk; ye mustn't have your bit laugh; it's just these beegots that bring us into disrepute with foreigners."

Now if Mr. Ross thought to plant a barbed arrow in the breast of Uncle Jock by these remarks about beegotry, he was

disappointed. For Jock's withers were unwrung. In his anger he made a stalking-horse of the Sawbeth, but not being particularly rigid himself upon the point, he received the remarks of Mr. Ross with the utmost good humour. And the worthy Angus, whose soul thirsted for a wordy combat, was considerably disappointed thereat.

Hardly was breakfast over when a little bell began to clank in a rapid importunate way, and going out we saw a man standing outside the little kirk and pulling vigorously at a rope that hung from the little belfry. And presently there set in a little stream of people, old women in tartan shawls, and dour-looking old fellows in Highland bonnets and grey tweed suits. Not that the stream flowed undivided into the little kirk with the bell. There were two others, if not three, all within hail of each other, which divided the faithful of Skye pretty evenly among them.

"I'm no' for the kirk," said Angus; "I'm for a bit walk, for I've got to meet a nevvay of mine."

At the mention of this nephew we all began to listen, Jennie especially, who bent upon Mr. Ross her eyes full of soft interest. And thereupon Angus began to expatiate upon his nephew. Our friend was not without family pride, and a certain tendency to boastfulness as to family connections and ramifications; and to hear him descant upon his nephew's triumphs and progress—how he carried off all the prizes of the London Academy, while his pictures had created quite a furore in 'the world of art, you would think that Ronald was indeed some bright particular star. "But yon lad's got moore than talent, as I told his father, he's got genius, or I'm much mistaken, and he'll make the name of Ross distinguished in the land; and yon man, his father, he's my ain brother—a highly clever man is Dr. Ross, and stands perhaps at the verry top of his profession, but beegoted, as I tell him—would have shut him up in a pulpit and made a preaching-block of him. And what if he paints lassies without their sarks, as my poor brother canna thole the notion of; why, it's all art as I tell him, and the ways of art are no' just like a theeo-logical lecture."

"For all that," interposed Uncle Jock, who had now recognised the identity of his antagonist, "I think the good doctor was grandly right." And then, after a little clearing up of names and dates, and mutual connections and friendships, the two men

launched out into a determined argument on the subject of poor Ronald, pacing up and down in front of the hotel quite forgetful of time and scene.

"I'm sure, Jennie, that everything is going beautifully for you," cried Mary Grant. And then I proposed that while the elders were thus busily engaged in confabulation, we others should start on a walk towards Sligachan, and meet Ronald, who was no doubt walking over from that direction. We could not be expected to go to kirk, for the services were in Gaelic, and Mrs. Gillies allowed that if we walked along quietly, we might be allowed to make the expedition.

The country was wild, not to say desolate, and close by was the head of the loch, which you would have taken for some fresh-water pool, but for the bank of seaweed that bounded the margin and the wet mark where the tide was silently ebbing away. And just above high-water mark were the huts of a little settlement of cottars, who might well be taken for remnants of an earlier race, survivors we will say from the glacial epoch, who had not long ago left their caves and holes in the rocks to dwell by the sea-shore, so weirdly ancient-looking are the little weather-beaten huts, that have taken the hues of the rocks, as if they were so many huge limpets that were clinging there. But except for a few old crones, and a band of scantily-clothed but splendidly healthy children, there were no inhabitants to be seen. And an old lady who spoke English informed us that all the men were away reaping the harvest of the sea. Aye, and most of the women too, who had followed the men. And the men had followed the herrings, which in July cease to swarm among the lochs of the western coast; had followed them eastward past Cape Wrath, and round the stormy Pentlands, and were now shooting their nets in the North Sea. And the women—were they fishing too? Well no, they found employment in cleaning and packing the fish at Wick, or Banff, or Peterhead.

"That is the way, always," said Jennie, "the men get all the nice adventurous noble work, and the women the nasty drudgery; but we are going to change all that." "But ye canna change the ways of Providence, lassie," cried the old dame in some astonishment. And then we left the cottars' huts behind us, and climbed higherto where there was a pretty waterfall dashing down the rocks, and soon after we saw a

solitary figure approaching along the desolate track, which turned out to be Ronald himself.

Ronald in very good spirits, for he had got fairly at work upon his picture, the subject a wild corrie among the Cuchullin hills, that would take all his powers to reproduce its glowing grandeur. And Uncle Angus had been rather a brick on the whole, depreciating his work indeed, but offering substantial help in a way that promised to smooth over some of the difficulties in his path. On the other hand, Jennie had unfavourable news to communicate about Uncle Jock, how inexcusable he was, and the indignation he had shown that Ronald should be meeting Jennie again. "We must take him out in the Firefly," said Ronald, "and then we'll give him the choice of giving his consent or being dropped overboard." And his friend Jemmie was working his yacht round to Portree, and Ronald had made up his mind that having made such a happy beginning to his picture, he could fairly take a couple of days' holiday to be happy with Jennie, rowing and sailing about, while his picture worked itself out in his mind.

While Jennie and her lover were talking over these things, Mary Grant and I walked on in front, and we fell into quite confidential conversation. She told me of her early life at Longashpan, when her father was yet alive. She hardly remembered her mother, who had died long before, and she the spoiled child of the house; of the boat she used to manage herself, and the wild little pony she used to ride. But father had been dead three years, still brightly remembered with something of a sob in the voice as she spoke of him, and an elder brother ruled at Longashpan with a wife who was—well, not very comfortable to live with. She had tried it for awhile, but would sooner be a hired servant than live there again, and now she was keeping house for Archie. But he would be married soon, perhaps, and then she would be adrift on the world. But adrift! No, there was no chance of that. Surely there was one heart somewhere that would be moved to try and hold her fast? Mary shook her head without speaking, and then said her companion:

"Was thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom
Lest my jewel I should tine."

"Oh," cried Mary, blushing and trembling a little, "I'm afraid you've

said that to many another before now." Heaven knows how far the affair would have gone if we had not plumped upon the two uncles, who had come on their way to meet us, still arguing tooth and nail, although they had changed their ground a little. They were on the kirk now, some interminable question about some insoluble theological problem. Old Angus looked rather taken aback when he caught sight of Ronald and Jennie walking together on such comfortable terms. "Why, ye never told me, laddie, that you expected friends to meet ye." "I wasn't sure, you see, uncle," replied Ronald, looking rather foolish. Uncle Jock, making a virtue of necessity, gave Ronald a reluctant hand, and then would have plunged again into controversy. "There's a great inconsistency in that argument of yours, my friend." But Angus would no longer give battle; he had secured Jennie, sending away his nephew with good-humoured imperativeness. And Ronald attached himself to Mary, who, I flatter myself, did not want him, while Jock and I walked moodily along together.

Just then we topped a commanding eminence, whence we saw spread out before us the rugged coast-line of Skye, with rocky islands scattered over the sound, the sea a deep blue, with a solitary sail upon it, the white high-peaked sail of a yacht. "There are some there," said Uncle Jock, shaking his head, "who are not over mindful of the Sawbeth."

"Why, that is the Firefly!" cried Ronald, "and Jem is bringing her up to lie at Portree to-night."

"Aye," said Angus proudly, "ye see what it is to be an artist, Mr. Gillies, and consort with the greatness of the land. That's the Hon. James Fraser with his yacht, and it would be a long time before he'd ask you a' me, Jock Gillies, to foregather with him. But ye'll mind it was the proudest king in Christendom that stooped to pick up the artist's pencil."

It was amazing to witness such a fervid vein in the otherwise rigid breast of the hard-shelled Angus, a spirit of opposition to the supposed prejudices of Uncle Jock. "But I'm thinking," he went on, firmly astride of the high horse; "there's some connection betwixt our family and the Frasers. There was my own sister's son married a widow, and her husband's first wife had been first cousin to the late lord. Ye might mention that little circumstance to the right honourable when ye speak with him."

"You shall mention it yourself," replied Ronald good-humouredly; "he made me promise that you should come for a sail with us to-morrow."

"And I should be leaving the island the morn," cried Angus; "well, but it's not every day I'll go yachting with a right honourable. The people of Mull will just have to be without me for a day, that's all."

We had now reached the little high-street of Portree, with its row of white-washed cottages looking over the cliff, and little bit of a court-house and gaol poked up in a corner. The white cottages are all done up wonderfully neat and bright, with knockers and door-mats, and all kinds of modern appliances, all ready for lodgers; and there is MacPhail's big shop—a universal store, where all things, from needles to anchors, are ready to the hand. And there is the bank with its brass-plate, and again another bank with another brass-plate, and a third a little further on, and perhaps others if we dived deeper into the matter, but in the way of kirks and banks the poorest place is sure to be amply provided.

And then the church-bell begins again—the same sturdy Highlander jerking doggedly the long rope from the belfry—and I propose to Mary Grant that we shall go to church.

It is a quiet sleepy little kirk, the plainest arrangement of bricks and boards that can possibly be conceived, all painted yellow, with a gallery where two or three people are sitting—out of a spirit of independence, for there is ample room below for all the congregation thrice told. Mary and I get seats on a handsome deal ledge with a high straight back distressing to the spinal column. There are two or three shepherds present, in grey tweed, and with wrinkled weather-beaten faces. And there is the agent of the bank—of one of the three, that is—with a few other notables of the town. And then the minister enters in a stately way in Geneva gown and bands, and marches up the pulpit-stairs—a pulpit that harmonises with the other decorations of the building—and then from a square pen in the middle of the kirk you hear the feeble note of a pitch-pipe, and the choir of youths and maidens strike up a hymn, or rather a paraphrase, which I take to be something in the way of a psalm. We all sit, except the choir, as if we were being sung to, and were expected to enjoy the treat. And then everybody stands up for prayer. Then there is the sermon, a good length, and

good, no doubt, in substance, but hardly containing a single idea that I can assimilate with those I have already in stock. One wants a new set of faculties altogether to get to the bottom of Scotch theology.

But always a vague sense of well-being, and surely a healthy appetite, await the dutiful attendant at kirk as soon as he gets out, with a feeling of high spirits suddenly relieved from strong pressure. Mary runs away as soon as we get back, and I join the tobacco symposium on the bench. And this time Angus pins me into a corner, and will have the whole story out of the trial before Lord Muddylaws. Happily in the middle of it the gong sounds for dinner, and I secure a seat by Mary Grant with a thankful heart. Ah, how ambrosial was the banquet that night in the Isle of Skye.

A MIDWAY MILESTONE.

"Come down," the simple letter says,
"And keep your Sabbath birthday here,
Come down and hear the church bells ring,
And hear the song the thrushes sing

Among the leafy bowers;
Come forth from dreary city ways,
And glad us with your presence, dear,
And longed-for as the summer flowers.

"Come down, and we will take once more
The heathy path across the hill;
Or saunter through the dewy lane,
Wherein we parted with such pain
A little year ago.

The heath is sweet with honey store,
The fair green lane is dewy still,
And I—I long to see you so!

"Come down, and we will sit again
Beside the milestone grey and old,
That stands without our garden gate,
The spot where I was wont to wait,
And listen, while your feet
Passed to the highway from the lane,
And my heart seemed too full to hold
Its tender bias, so new and sweet."

I sit me in the summer dusk,
The sultry dusk of city ways,
I put the letter from my hand,
And memory brings at my command
The past before mine eyes.
I see a garden, sweet with musk
And lilies, wrapped in silver haze,
And sleeping under summer skies.

A garden gateway, clothed about
With cream and crimson woodbine flowers,
And in the copse across the way,
The bird that singeth not by day,
Chants of her cruel fate.

The long white highway stretches out,
And faint pink eglantine embowers
A milestone by the garden gate.

A stone that on its ancient face
A magic number shows to me,
In quaint old figures mossy-brown,
So many miles to London town—
So many years have I;
Ah, little girl! the barren space
Of my spent youth 'twixt me and thee,
For evermore must coldly lie.

I think the moonlight touched my brain
That summer night a year ago;

Though sweet thy love, I had no right
To win the sacred blossom white
Of thy pure girlish heart;
Thy tears fell down like summer rain,
To hear me tell my tale of woe,
Would God they could have healed the smart!

Would God that to my empty home,
Where sombre shadows come at will,
Mine hand could lead thee, to dispel
The doleful memories that dwell
Beside its hearthstone cold;
Or would that I with thee could roam
The dewy lane, the heath-clad hill,
And sit beside the milestone old.

Would God, sweet child, that I could share
The simple glee that fills thine heart,
That all the griefs and all the tears
That filled my life of forty years,
Might pass like morning dew;
Would God that I could pray thy prayer,
From all the world's illusions part,
And twine thy roses with my rue.

"Is it too late?" my heart cries out;
"Too late, too late!" I make reply;
I had no right to speak of love,
The eagle mates not with the dove,
I know the truth to-night;
I see the way too clear for doubt,
I lay the simple letter by;

The midway milestone fades from sight.

If I have harmed thee, gentle child,
I will not deepen yet the wrong;
I could not quit my busy strife
To share thy simple country life;
The freshness of my soul
Has faded in world-pathways wild;
Pass on, and sing thy simple song,
I am too rough for love's control.

I could not sit in peaceful ease
With thee among the garden flowers;
Nor could I sip—whose lips have quaffed
Life's strongest wine—the simple draught
Thou offerest gay and glad;
The soothing murmur of the trees,
The incense of the woodbine bowers,
Year after year, would drive me mad!

And so I lay thy letter down,
And keep my birthday here apart;
Pass on, my little darling, free,
A brighter future waits for thee
In life's untrodden ways;
Pass on, and win thy woman's crown
And kingdom, in a youthful heart;
God give thee good, and length of days!

And I, life's midway milestone past,
What more with love have I to do?
My heart's lone memories, bitter-sweet,
Bestrew the ground before my feet,
Like wrecks on winter's sea;
God grant the young their dreams may last,
Mine early died—yet love is true
I well believe, though dead for me!

OLD-FASHIONED WEATHER.

RICHARD (And he was at Bosworth): Give me a
Calendar!

Who saw the sun to-day?

RATCLIFFE: Not I, my lord.

RICHARD: Then he disdains to shine; for, by the
book,

He should have brav'd the east an hour ago.

It was an angry outburst, an angry
denunciation, because the skies were grey
and without radiance, were hanging low
and threatening over those Leicestershire

slopes and runnels and spinneys, on the 22nd of August, 1485. Let the date be particularly noted, because it is very well known that there never were any dull and colourless days in the Augusts of long ago. Summers were summers then; winters were winters.

"Why," is the cry of everybody, "when I was young, we never used to have this kind of weather! The summers used to melt us! They were hot and hot; they were blazing; we would drive in the shade; we could not face the fierce blazing of the sun; there was scarcely air to breathe!"

And winter?

"Ah, winter! Glorious old winter! Snow, ice, frost, icicles. White fields, white rivers, white hills, white roads. Trees feathered with crisp fallings; rime, hoar; water that had to be hammered; milk turned out of basins in blocks that you could hurl like cannon-balls; meat changed to red and yellow streaky stone. Inspiring brightness in the air, rosiest cheeks, snow-balls, ice statues, games full of fun and mischief and jollity; weeks of it, weeks; not one day a frost and the next slopes; but weeks; and all glory!"

Anything intermediate?

"Yes, autumn. A rich golden autumn, full of brown harvest and a silver moon. And as for spring, it was one long May-day, with may-poles and may-feastings; and flowers in garlands; and dancing on the green; and curds and whey; and sitting on the banks; and gathering nose-gays; and the girls in white; and the little lambs; and everything rejoicing. And what is more, it had been just as I say it was, in my father's and mother's time; and in their fathers' and mothers' time, and in their fathers' and mothers' before that. I have often and often, I have again and again, heard them say so."

It ought to be conclusive; and it would be, if the glorifying power of youth were not conclusive, also; if the splendid gift of retrospection did not include the even more splendid gift of only fragmentary retrospection, so that mere flashes of events come back to the mind, so that some momentary radiance, shorn of drawback, or blot, or gloom, or discord, gives radiance to a whole season, possessing the power to annihilate the drearinesses and roughnesses that came before the radiance—possessing the power to annihilate the drearinesses and roughnesses that, wearisomely enough, could not have failed

to have come after. So let us attempt to see what old-fashioned weather really was. Let questions about the weather, that is, be put into an arena that is the arena likely to render fairly reliable answers. In short, let the cry be, "Give me a calendar!" just as Shakespeare made it King Dickon's cry, on the morning of that memorable Bosworth battle. For, though calendars but predicted weather, yet predictions, it is known, keep within probabilities rigidly. Predictions of weather, moreover, beyond all other predictions, never pointed to anything but what was thoroughly normal, failing, when they did fail, not on the score of utter falsity and extravagance, but merely on the minor matter of short difference between the moments of fulfilment and expectation. Let a calendar be brought, therefore, and when brought, let it be looked at with interest.

Here is one, as it chanced, printed for 1487. It is so near to Richard's speech that it was being prepared when Bosworth battle was little over twelve months old. A large wide-spread sheet this calendar is, with red letters and with black letters, both colours having been diverted into significance in the history of almanacs and of printing. It is as early, possibly, as any calendar or any almanac that was ever printed at all, yet it can be read as easily as if it had been issued for the present year. The twelve months are set out on it: Jenner, for January; Horuang, for February; Mertz; Apprill; Mey; Brachmond (June); Heymond (July); Augst; Herbstmond (September); Veinmond (October); Vintermond (November); Cristmond—Christ's Moon, with a beautiful poetry—(December). So are there especial spaces on the broad-sheet for the Neumondt, the new moon; for the Volmond, the full moon; and festival days are put down. For example: "Oster," for Easter. For example again: "Am abend und Thome apostoli"—each item, in its charming legibility, giving direct and pleasant invitation. For all that, it must be put aside. It is German. It was printed at Ingoldstadt. Such weather as it will point to will be German weather, valueless for the present purpose of ascertaining English weather, and it must go.

Take another specimen. This fragment merely; headed, where the heading is left, *In Gottes Namen Volget nach die tafel des Jars Christi, Mcccxcvii (1497?)* No. It will not do. It is still German. And so

is this next, for 1521; "Gestruckt" (struck off), as it says it was, in der Kayserlichen stat Augspurg, by Erhardt. It is even more engaging than the first; for it goes so much into detail, it says: "Jenner hat xxxi tag, Hornung hat xxviii tag," and so on; for it announces the weather with fine precision; as, when on the twenty-sixth Weinmon (October) it speaks of the change of moon bringing rain and wind, with the succeeding days being cold and dry (anfang feucht mit regen und wind, die andern tag kalt und trüb). But again this weather is German weather. And a degree's difference in place or position, or half-a-degree's difference—nay, or fractions of half-a-degree's difference, had immense, had even vital, import in these marvellous and delicate computations. Rectified for the Elevation of the Pole Articke and Meridian of Great Yarmouth in Norff., is a specimen of the usual preamble to an English calendar; or, Rectified for the Meridian of the famous Citie of London, where the Pole Artick is Elevated fifty-one degrees and thirty-two minutes. And where it was necessary for Norfolk and for Middlesex, districts so near, to show that a separate gentleman, or student, or practitioner in physicke and chirurgery, had computed for each such separate and several computations as gave the only chance of complete and thorough instruction, it would indeed be unfair to fuse together such widely distant countries as Germany and England, daring to make fine prognostications arrived at for the one, serve to note events that came to pass in the other.

And there is no need, either, for any such indiscriminate generalisation. Here is an Almynack and Pronostication for 1530, in serviceable English. It is nothing that it was Emprinted at Antwerpe by me, Cristofel of Rureniunde. It is nothing that it was "rectified" (if that be the right word) by Gaspar Laet The Yonger, Docter yn Physic (the De Laets being a learned Antwerp family, one of whom, afterwards, disputed with Grotius). It has the orthodox Dieu et mon Droit to grace it; it has the Honi soit qui mal y pense intermingled; it has the English Rose (white and red both, for sure, had it attempted colour) to embellish these mottoes—not omitting the still lawful fleur-de-lys.

This old-fashioned weather was to range itself always into four separate and distinct divisions in each month; one division for every division, or change, of the moon. It is precisely what could have

been supposed. "Thy complexion shifts to strange effects, after the moon." Accordingly, the Januarie weather of 1530 stands thus: In the first moon-phase, Misty reyne with colde; in the second, Temperat cold and fresing; in the third, Temperat according to the tyme; in the last, Chaungeabil and tempestuous. The Februarie variations stand: Cold with moisture, Troubelous and wyndy; As byfore; and Colde with wynde and intemperat. Marche became, Temperat after the tyme, sumwhat wynde; Troubelous with wynde; Reyne cold and variacyon; Temperat after the tyme. Aprill became, As byfore but mysty; Mesural moisture; As byfore; Good weder with moisture. May (and this is a test most weighty, most conspicuous) was, in its first week, As byfore, troubelous—and this first week holding May Day!—was, in its second week, Chaungeabil with colde; in its third, Colde and windy; in its fourth, Temperat and moyst. Juyn (almost as destructively) was, at first, As byfore with wynde; next, Varyabil and some dele wynde; next, As byfore; lastly, Temperat hete. Julius (a little nearer to report, affording the requisite groundwork for it) was, Drawing to hete and moisture; Good weder sumwhat warm; As byfore but dryer; Varyabil with hete. Augustus (going as wrong as wrong could be, again) was, As byfore troubelous; Sumtyme colds, sumtyme hete, chaungeabil; Good applying to moisture; Sumwhat moyst and windy; giving a fifth change—the month being long, and an extra sumwhat being bound to be squeezed in somewhere—As byfore, but varyabil. September was, Wyndy temperat with colde; Troubelous and sumtyme not cold; Variabil out of mesure with thunder; sumwhat colde with variacion. October became, Chaungeabil wyndy with colde; Wyndy as byfore and darke; Evyll weder troubelous; Reyne and cold. November—but stay a moment. There runs a shiver through September and October and there might. For 1530 is the year when Wolsey—his word flouted at, instead of hung upon—after wretchedly shifting, or wretchedly being shifted, from London to Esher, from Esher to Winchester, from Winchester to Cawood, was being compelled to make one more wretched shift from Cawood to Leicester, through the sloppy shires. And, further: 1530 being the year (Catherine not yet divorced, only insultingly put aside, and Anne Boleyn radiantly expectant), November was the month when Wolsey was forced to

perform this wretched final shifting, the Earl of Northumberland being the power at hand to hedge him, and his warrant that high-treacherous accusal of high treason. And what the weather was that was whirling and sweeping outside the old man's litter in those last dishonoured days acquires a significance that is tragic. Listen to it. When the month was in the first quarter, November was chaungeabill, colde, wyndy; when she was in her second quarter, there was reyne to fall, and colde to give the rain fuller misery. When the moon was in the third quarter—Nottinghamshire being paced through by the disgraced old man, Leicestershire being close ahead—the month was wyndy and colde. As the sorrowful miles succeeded one another, as there came more and more of dread anticipation, as Leicester city, with its abbey, appeared in sight—as the moon had reached her last quarter, and the twenty-eighth day of the month had come, and Leicester Abbey was there—its gates flung reverently open, its monks reverently kneeling to Wolsey as he cried out: "Take me! I have come to lay down my bones! And would that I had served my God as faithfully as I have served my King!" November's wind and November's cold were still there to bleach the dying face and wither it. The Calendar's words are, "Holdit his nature as byfore." Following which, there is but December to note; with, first, its Applying to colde and snowe; next, its Moyst with snowe; next its Fresing windy and applying to snowe; lastly, its Moyst with wynde; and the yere 1530 has been lived through, yielding much that was wanted, and yielding nothing that has not been thankfully received.

But it will be said, and said vehemently, and with some irony: "One year is nothing. Does a swallow make a summer?"

All right. "Give me a calendar" again. Here is one that will do as excellently as the last. It is An Almanake and Pronostication for the yere of our Lorde M, L L L L L and XXXVII (1537) ("Ester Daye" in it, it is interesting to note, having fallen on the 1st of April), and what does it show? The first quarter of January was Colde with snowe; the second quarter was Moyst and great snowe; the third was Reyne with wynde; the fourth was Dry and temperat. The first quarter of February was Moyste and meately warm; the second, Moyste and froste; the third,

Cold and wyndy; the fourth, Moyst March was Moysti and misty weder; Dr. and temperat weder; Moysti weder after the time; Colde and wyndi. April (th Easter week) was Colde and moyst; the Wyndi; then Variable and wyndi; the Moyst and wyndi. May was Lusty and drye, at first—which must have been a joy indisputably—but the second division of it was Inclinat to cold and reyen; the third was Variable and thonder; the fourth was Wyndi and mysti; the fifth, Moyst. June was Wyndi and variable; was Moyst and wyndi; had Reyne and wynde, and great tempest; was Varyable. In July the weather was still Moyst; and Wynde; and Varyable and wynde; and Moyst and varyable. In August it was Wyndi Moyst and thonder; Moyste and storm weder; Wynde and colde. In September it was Moyste and Wynde; Darke and wynde; Moyste and wynde. Moisture enough, of a surety. With it, too, there were executions—of Sir Robert Constable, Sir John Bulmer, Sir Thomas Percy and more—at Lincoln and on Towre Hill, making things sadder and more dismal. Indeed, there seems to fall so much sadness, so much dismalness, it may be asked, Is it any omen?—does it portend anything? From practitioners of physick and chirurgery, from prognosticators, calculators, the wise—the weather-wise—the mysterious, the necromantic, of those Tudor days, there would come a "Yes," straight. For here is October, with the first quarter of it Moyst and wynde; here is its second quarter Cold and moyst; and on the tenth day of the month, this second quarter just in, here is Jane Seymour—that cold and that moisture penetrating to her, finding their way through arras and portiers through jewelled screen and gold-embroidered curtain, unable to be kept from her spite of flaming log and andiron, spite of the fevered watchfulness of a royal husband and an interested nation—here is Jane Seymour giving birth to her little Edward and here, on the twelfth day, is her faithful motherhood all over, and her poor young body stretched and dead. It seems fit that the rest of October should be Moyst, wynde and colde; should be stricken with Wind and colde. It seems fit that November should be Moyst and wyndi; Dark and Froste; Froste; and Froste and wind. That December should be marked Wynde and snow; and Cold moyst; and Moyst and wynde; and Moyst and colde. For with Henry's divorce of Catherine useless

again, with Henry's execution of Anne Boleyn useless, and rising up to affright him, with his untimely marriage of Jane thus brought to an untimely end, England itself, in the "conceit" of the time, must have been full of tears, and the heavens were only playing a proper part in keeping England company.

But even now there will leap up, probably, the incredulous and antagonistic cry: "Absurd! Even two years are nothing! Is that trifling amount of evidence to upset conviction?"

Well, and even now there can be no difficulty in getting as much more evidence as can possibly be desired. "Give me a calendar," once more. Or, to vary the cry from that that issued violently from a battle-tent to that that was heard pleasantly on a peaceful midsummer night, "A calendar! a calendar! Look in the almanac! Find out moonshine, find out moonshine!" And as Quince produces the almanac, poring over it for the right column, and right month, and right day, answering Snug's question, "Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?" with "Yes, it doth shine that night," a head shall be thrust over his rustic shoulder, to look at what he looks at, and to take good scrutiny of all else that there is besides. In strict consistency, too, this third English Calendar, being for 1568, is the only one in which direct Shakespearian interest effectively exists. It is because Shakespeare was in the world in 1568, four years old; whereas the previous weather that has been chronicled was weather of so very old a fashion that when its "meately" warmth gave English people hilarity, and its winter "snowe" made English people shudder, not even Shakespeare's father and mother had yet trod the Wellingcote 'crofts," or been dreamt of among wool-staplers, or in the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation. Direct interest of another sort, also, lies in this Almanac for 1568. It is of English birth. Imprinted at London, by Richard Jugge, Dwellinge at the north doore of Pouls, is the clear signature to it. A link links it on, in good literary manner, to the Dutch—"Emprented" "Almynacke" of 1530, for all that. Gaspar Laet, it will be recollected, was the authority, in the 1530 issue, for the Mesural moysture of Aprill, for the Varyabill and some dele wyndy "weder" of Juyn; so it was "Alphonsus Laet, rother of M. Jaspas Laet, Doctor in

Physicke and Astronomy," who consulted sun, moon, and stars for the "Prenostications" of 1568, and vouched for their infallible accuracy. Family connection, it will be observed; family honourable reputation having monetary value, and being prominently brought forward for legitimate business ends; and this at a date when Rizzio and Darnley had been only a few months murdered, when Mary was Bothwell's wife, and she, unwifed again, was actually at Loch Leven, preparing for her escape. It is a strange medley of the actualities of life and the romance of it. But such strangeness is never absent; it is only, many times and again, sunk fathom deep out of realisation. And bound in all these ways to this calendar of 1568, and bound in all these ways intimately, let it be examined.

Unluckily, January is gone from it; March is gone from it; May is gone. One side of the top half of the sheet (the months going up and down, up and down alternately) has been torn away. This makes February's weather the first weather that is available. It is Cold, hayle, and snow; Cold wyth snow; Temperate. April comes next. It is Temperate; it turns to Wynd; it turns to Rayn. June follows. It is Fayr; it is Thunder; it is Variable; it is Fayre and hote. July. It is Hote; it is Hote; it is Hote; it is Fayr; for Alphonsus Laet had learned English brevity in calculating almanacs for Richard Jugge to sell at the north doore of Pouls; he had not the foreign disquisitiveness of his brother Jaspas. And here in August it is Fayre; it is Hote; it is Fayre again. Here is September, Hote; Tempest; Fayr; Temperate. October: Rain; Rayn; Rayn; Rayn; the only variety being in the spelling. November: Cold; Cold; Cold; Rayn and Wynd. December: Cold; Frost; Cold and Snow; Cold.

There are no rigidly-defined barricades severing heat from cold here, surely; making it clear that weather, formerly, knew its manners; never dreaming of letting winter become half like summer, and summer half like winter. Yet was it not

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw.

—was it not this that was what Shakespeare said of winter when he had had a few more than four birthdays?—when he, having seen wool-stapling in the intervals of his school-going, could say, “He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument;” could go on ruminating, “Let me see: Every seven wether (so many) tods; every tod yields (so many) pound and odd shillings; with one thousand five hundred shorn, what comes the wool to?” Yes. But Shakespeare’s weather was not computed, calculated, rectified, “emprented,” or “gestruckt,” for good pennyworths at Paul’s door. That is, Shakespeare’s weather was not weather that was lived through, felt through, suffered through; watched, from day to day, and hour to hour, to see when would be the right moment to saunter by the Avon’s side, and when it would be best to keep the seat on the broad oak-settle by the “sea-coal fire.” It was the generalisation of weather. It was the weather of a momentary picture; the same as everybody else’s (past) weather is the weather of a momentary picture; long days and weeks and months having no place upon the canvas, either by sentiment or canon.

Almanacs are “riff-raff books,” was Bodley’s judgment during Shakespeare’s life; when Shakespeare was not yet Shakespeare, however, to anybody, but when Bodley was drawing literature together to form his library. “I can see no Good Reason,” he reiterates, “to alter my Opinion for excluding such Books as Almanacks.” No. And the rest of the world sees no good reason to alter its opinion for excluding the remembrance of the weather that almanacs report. Holding to the main divisions of the year, holding to the main characteristics of the months, the world is satisfied that the division and characteristics were, at one time, kept to inexorably, in detail. Here are these main characteristics of the months, in emblematic pictures, on an Almanac Sheet the date of which, judging by method and costume, was still Shakespearian, and 1600. A double-headed man stands before a banquet, taking the covers off the meats, to represent January; it was the season for the table and good-cheer. A man on a stool represents February; he has taken off one shoe, and holds the unshod foot, and both his hands, close to a blazing fire. It is “evyll weder” out of doors, and shelter is acceptable. A girl represents March. She is in a garden that

has palings round it, with here and there a timber alcove; and she is hoeing. It is time to prepare the ground. In April, a man ploughs, his plough drawn by two horses. In May, a girl, seated, takes a bath in a tub in a garden, holding a small tree bough in her hand. In June, a man chops wood, his axe swung far and high behind him, with strong muscle. It is time to thin the forests, foliage being thick. In July, a man has his scythe out cutting grass, flowers shooting up amongst it freely. In August, a girl uses a sickle Norma-like only cutting straight-up close-grown corn. In September a man is gathering grapes, a wine-press near. In October, a man is upon a ladder gathering apples from the tree, a full sack erect upon the ground, a basket for the immediate gathering hanging on a branch. In November, a man chops again, great lying tree-trunks this time the living trees of background quite bare. It is time to think of shelter, timber being universal for it (mainly), timber being abundant, and needing the seasoning which winter will give time for. In December, a man is ready to heave his hatchet down upon an animal’s throat, a lad holding the poor brute’s head back to receive the blow. It is time for preparation for the indoor revelry that in due course will begin in the January again. There is interest in these pictures—little circular headings as they are—for two reasons. First, because of the individual suggestions of Stuart life they show; secondly, because of the further proof they afford that there has been no displacement of seasons, or striking alteration of seasons, as is apt to be thought because details of bygone seasons have passed out of the mind, since here are months in old-fashioned weather bringing practically the same succession of crop and labour that months practically are bringing now. “The year begins with fierce storms, windy weather at sea,” say Astrologer Lilly himself, the English Merlin in his Almanack for 1647. In the April of it “We may expect showers and cold blasts, winds and great cold, not a little hurting our fruit” (and well that “our fruit could even get a mention; with rebels here, and rebels there, and Cromwell trampling through the counties, and Charles put to flight); and so on. There is no difference in it, in the gross. “This was a most exceeding wet yeare,” say John Evelyn of the next year, 1648 “neither frost nor snow all the Winter for more than six days in all; cattle die

every where of murrain." Does that look like winter being winter invariably, and winter being invariably crusted in ice for all a long winter through? There came exceptional seasons, when weather did keep to one expression for several weeks. For instance, there was the extreme severity of 1684, recorded also by Evelyn, when "coaches plied from Westminster to the Temple on the Thames, and from several other staircases and fro, as in the streets; sleds, sliding with skeetes, a bull-baiting, horse and coach-races, puppet-plays and interludes . . . a printing presse . . . all sorts of trades and shops," and what not. There was a marked winter in 1716, after as many as thirty-two years, let it be observed; there was another in twenty-three years more, 1739; there was one in 1762. This one can be seen by the brilliant light of Horace Walpole. On February the 2nd, he, the Duke of York, Lord Hertford, and the Ladies Northumberland and Mary Coke, went in a hackney-coach to Cock Lane, to see the ghost, and the winter was so far of the ordinary type of winters that "it rained torrents;" but on the 22nd day of the month things changed. Says Walpole, "As we have never had a rainbow to assure us that the world shall not be snowed to death, I thought last night was the general connixation. We had a tempest of wind and snow for two hours beyond any thing I remember. Chairs"—sedan-chairs, of course—"were blown to pieces, the streets covered with tassels, and glasses, and tiles; and coaches and chariots were filled like reservoirs. . . . It is a week of wonders, and worthy the note of an almanack-maker."

It is not at all necessary to multiply these rarities. Let it only be remembered that they were rarities; and let the mind be kept in the attitude to acknowledge that, when weather has made a deep impression, it most likely was a rarity, or the deep impression never would have been made. In 1762, as a fact supporting this, Walpole was forty-four years old, yet says the tempest was "beyond anything" he could remember. It was not normal. What, in truth, was normal in the weather lived through and recorded by Walpole, was precisely what is normal in the weather of these years now. It is May the 4th, he says, "as they call it, but the weather and the almanack of my feelings affirm it is December." That was in 1754. On May the 19th, two years after, he says, "I believe the French have taken the sun." Yet

he can say, on October the 21st, 1759: "I have not dined or gone to bed by a fire till the day before yesterday. It is still all gold . . . I call it this ever warm and victorious year." This shows that there could be cold springs, that there could be warm autumns, in the centuries that have gone. "Nothing lasts now but the bad weather," Walpole cries again. "The cold and the wet have driven me back to London," from his dear "County of Twicks." And his general opinion was that English weather did very well if "framed and glazed," that is, if it could be endured, or lived through, where the damp of it was well screened away.

"Her passions . . . are greater storms and tempests than almanacks can report," says Antony of Cleopatra. How good it is that almanacs did report! And let the old-fashioned weather that they show, henceforth be accepted as reality.

SLIPSHOD KNOWLEDGE.

IN a debate during the last agitation for Reform, Mr. John Bright compared a certain clique in the House of Commons to the occupants of the "Cave of Adul-lam." A reference to the newspapers of the time will show that by many persons the allusion was supposed to be classical (doubtless from the appearance of the phrase), and the fact that it was scriptural dawned but slowly on the public mind. This is one example of many instances of the slipshod nature of public knowledge. Many quotations which have become "old sayings," are attributed to the Bible or to Shakespeare, according to the likeness they bear either to the expressions of Holy Writ, or to the writings of the great dramatist, and the supposed connection has been so often reiterated that it has become generally accepted or taken for granted, few persons ever thinking of doubting the relationship, and fewer still troubling to enquire into the matter. "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," was long attributed to the Psalms of David, until oft-repeated corrections have convinced people that the sentiment belongs to Maria in Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. The epigram, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," is still often quoted as one of the Proverbs of Solomon, and is rarely attributed to its author, Butler (see *Hudibras*, Part II., canto 2, line 843). The nearest

approach to any such phrase to be found in the Bible is the text, "He who spareth the rod hateth his son" (Prov. xiii., 24). The reference to "pouring oil on troubled waters" is often supposed to be scriptural, though the Bible does not make any such allusion. "Man wants but little here below," is an expression no older than Goldsmith's *Hermit*, though it is generally quoted either as scripture or as a line from an ancient hymn. "Mansions of the blest" are mentioned in the *Revelations*, not of St. John the Divine, but to the Monk of Evesham (A.D. 1496).

The critic who complained of Hamlet, that it was "too full of quotations," did not generalise more erroneously in attributing to others what belongs to Shakespeare than do those who attribute to Shakespeare what is due to other writers. "Richard's himself again," and "Off with his head, so much for Buckingham," are certainly to be found in *Richard III.*, but they are in Colley Cibber's play, not in Shakespeare's; while on the other hand "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse," so often quoted as Colley Cibber's, was actually written by Shakespeare. The instances of this inexactness are very numerous. The Bible is credited with many things written by Pope; many of the utterances of Sancho Panza are put down to Shakespeare; while the galaxy of epigrams in Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse* (A.D. 1579) are attributed to almost every one but the author of them.

Phonics are a fruitful source of error. The sound of a word often leads astray those who acquire knowledge in a slipshod fashion. People have long been familiar with the cocoa-nut or fruit of the palm-tree; but it is only within the last few years that they have become acquainted with the beverage obtained from the cacao shrub. The result has been that the word "cocoa" is used for the product of both plants, and many people think that both the nut and the "nibs" have the same source; thus similarity of sound causes a complete misapprehension. A more serious error is in regard to the etymology of the word "Bombay." To those acquainted with the Romanic languages, the word has certainly the appearance of meaning "good bay," or "good harbour." It can have been nothing but this appearance which led so careful a writer as Harriet Martineau, as well as Outram and many other writers, to gravely assure us that the Portuguese, on discovering the place, and observing the

fine haven in front of it, exclaimed, "Buon Bahia!" ("good bay"). The statement, however, is quite erroneous. The name dates from a period anterior to the arrival of the Portuguese in India. By the natives the name is still written Mambé, and very often Bambé. In the East the initials "B" and "M" are frequently used promiscuously. In the Koran, Mecca is written of as Becca. In Pepys's diary the word is written Bombaim, and soon after Pepys's time it became Bombay. The name is derived from Mambé, and the place is so called because there was on the island a temple dedicated to that goddess. Another instance of an error arising from similarity in sound is in the phrase "setting the Thames on fire." The substitution of the name of a river for the correct word entirely deprives the expression of any meaning, and so general has the error become that, foolish though the mistake is, it is perhaps useless to attempt to restore the true signification of the saying, which like many others is traceable to the domestic pursuits of our forefathers before machinery did so much of their work. Many years ago, before machinery was introduced into flour-mills for the purpose of sifting flour, it was the custom of the miller to send it away unsifted. The process of sifting was done at home, thus: The temse, or sieve, which was moved with a rim that projected from the bottom of it, was worked over the mouth of the barrel into which the flour or meal was sifted. The active fellow, who worked hard, not unfrequently set the rim on fire by force of friction against the rim of the flour-barrel; so that this department of domestic employment became a standard by which to test a man's will and capacity to work hard. Thus, of a lazy fellow, or one deficient in strength, it was said he "will never set the temse on fire." The word is still in common use in Lincolnshire to signify the sieve used by brewers to remove the hops from the beer.

Another instance of a wide-spread error traceable to a phonetic source, was the funny freak played some years ago with the refrain to one of the war anthems of the rebellion in America. "Glory, Glory Hallelujah," was shouted and sung in the streets and concert-halls of England, as was the Jingo chorus a few years ago. There was no connection between the refrain and the verses to which it was attached. What cause for Hallelujah could there be in the

fact that "John Brown's bones lie mouldering in the dust," or that there was a particular number on his knapsack? Those, however, who heard the anthem or marching song in America, or sung by Americans, could at once appreciate the connection of the correct refrain, as the following verse sufficiently shows:

John Brown's bones lie mouldering in the dust,
John Brown's bones lie mouldering in the dust,
John Brown's bones lie mouldering in the dust,
But his soul is marching on.

Glory, glory to the Union,
Glory, glory to the Union,
Glory, glory to the Union,
For his soul is marching on.

The errors in history and geography arising from a slipshod method of ascertaining facts are so numerous and widely spread, that they are to be found even in text-books and standard primers. Almost every school-boy will declare that Mont Blanc is in Switzerland, and will produce his "school-book" in proof of his assertion. A reference, however, to a standard book on geography (Keith Johnston's Geography, 1880), or to a good atlas, will show that Mont Blanc is in France. Again, the introduction of tobacco into England, usually considered one of the main events in the life of Sir Walter Raleigh, will be found by those who care to enquire into the subject to be due to Sir John Hawkins about the year 1565. For the importation of the narcotic in quantity, and for the knowledge of how to smoke it, we are indebted to Captain Ralph Lane. After this the reader will not be surprised to learn that the anecdote which records how Raleigh's servant threw a jug of beer over her master, under the impression that he was on fire when he was only smoking a pipe, is a pure fiction, not associated with Raleigh's name until 1726. The story is told of a Welshman, in *The Irish Hubbub*; or, the English Hue and Cry (A.D. 1619), as follows: "A certaine Welchman comming newly to London, and beholding one to take tobacco, never seeing the like before, and not knowing the manner of it, but perceiving him vent smoke so fast, and supposing his inward parts to be on fire, cried out, 'O, Jhesu, Jhesu man, for the passion of God hold, for by God's splud ty snowt's on fire,' and having a bowle of beere in his hand, threw it at the other's face to quench his smoking nose." A similar story is related of Tarlton in *Tarlton's Jestes* (A.D. 1611). All anecdotes of great men should be received with caution. The person who

declared that his religion was the religion of all sensible men, and on being asked, "What is that?" replied, "All sensible men keep that to themselves," is said to be Talleyrand, Thackeray, and a host of others.

Another error in history to be found in many books even pretending to authority, is that trial by jury was established by King Alfred. A reference to Green's *History of the English People*, Sec. viii., will show that it was not in existence until the reign of Henry the Second. Again, even standard works declare that William the First was surnamed the "Conqueror," because he conquered England; but according to the greatest authority on English law, this circumstance was at best but the penultimate cause of the title given to the Norman warrior. Blackstone explains in his chapter on Title by Purchase that "Purchase, perquisitis, taken in its largest sense, is defined the possession of lands and tenements, which a man hath by his own act or agreement, and not by descent . . . What we call purchase the feudist called conquest, both denoting any means of acquiring an estate otherwise than by inheritance. Hence the appellation given to William the Norman, signifying that he was the first of his family who acquired the crown of England. This is the legal signification of the word purchase."

It is thus seen that in literature, in history, and in geography, the state of knowledge among the general public is anything but exact. It might be shown that in every other department of knowledge the same feature obtains. There is a work on "caulking" which shows that the author does not know how to spell the name of the thing he is writing about, for a reference to Chambers's Dictionary, or any other similar standard work, will show that the "u" in "caulk" is as much out of place as it would be in chalk, talk, and walk.

Even men who think themselves educated still imagine that thunderbolts exist in fact, instead of merely in the imagination of the ancients, as is recorded in Homer that Jupiter had

His triple thunder and his bolts of fire.

In comparing the soldierly qualities of Wellington and Napoleon, it is often forgotten that they only met once in battle—viz., on the field of Waterloo. Lord Beaconsfield was jeered at by his oppo-

nents and admired by his friends for the use of the phrase, "Peace with honour," while, as a matter of fact, it was first used, not by him, but to him, in a civic address at Dover, when his lordship landed there on his return from Berlin. Similarly, Mr. Forster has incurred much odium by the addition of "Buckshot" to his name, but it is now known that there was no ground whatever for the opprobrious epithet. Up to this day it is often said that J. S. Mill styled the Conservatives the "stupid party," though what the great philosopher actually said was, "Show me a stupid man, and I will show you a Conservative." Surely even a dull man can see that Mr. Mill might think that all stupid men were Conservatives, without believing that all Conservatives were stupid. Mr. Freeman, the historian, is at last tired of explaining that he never preached the "Perish India" doctrine, and yet hardly a day elapses without his high authority being quoted in support of the doctrine, and himself as author of the phrase. "Double entendre," used as a noun by so many English people, is a simple barbarism, the correct expression being "double entente," as every French scholar is perfectly aware. A serious error often made, both in Parliament and the press, is in the statement that the demand creates the supply, and on the basis of the false theory numberless fallacies are erected. Students of Adam Smith know well enough that although demand affects supply, it does not create it. On the other hand, it is supply that creates the demand. There was no demand for stockings or steam-engines until they were invented—that is, until there was a supply of them.

The above instances of slipshod knowledge show how widely spread is inexactness in almost everything that is talked about and written about. Let it not be thought that the matter is unimportant. "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good," is an excellent maxim. If the premises of a proposition be false the conclusion cannot be true. Politicians and statesmen, as well as ordinary persons, accept a statement as true, and take it for granted, because almost everybody believes it, and then deduce therefrom the wildest theories, leading unthinking people sadly astray. Who has not heard an orator start with the declaration, "There is no rule without an exception," or "The exception proves the rule," and then argue as if the rule were correct simply because an exception existed? Logicians know, however,

the fallacy of such reasoning. A sound reasoner knows that there is no exception to any rule. If there be what is called an exception, all that is proved is that the rule is not sufficiently comprehensive, is not properly worded. In these days of verbose speaking and slipshod writing people will do well first of all to ascertain that even the most trivial matters are correct, before they admit that the conclusions from them are sound. More errors are promulgated by slipshod knowledge and by taking statements for granted simply because they have been often repeated and are widely believed, than many persons imagine, and it is a waste of course to reduce every proposition to a syllogism, with the premises well and carefully established.

A PASSING CLOUD A STORY.

"VAL, will you take my advice?"

"It depends whether it suits my fancy dear. Did you ever know anyone take advice otherwise?"

Lady Marchmont laughed. "I am afraid mine will hardly do so in this instance. I would suggest that you take a book and try to read, as the time would pass much quicker if you did not stare at the clock every five minutes. There is one on that table that could not fail to interest you, it is the story of a fair maid who suffered all the 'pangs, the agonies, the doubts' of a true love, that did not, like yours, run smooth."

"I should probably throw it to the other end of the room after five minutes."

"And to think," said Lady Marchmont meditatively, "to think that six months ago you did not know this hero who is now making such havoc in your peace of mind."

Valérie rose impatiently from her seat and walked across to the window, a frown ruffling the serenity of her white forehead and a vexed look in her pretty grey eyes.

She was a tall slender girl, with more claims to beauty than are accorded from the mere possession of regular features and a faultless complexion, which good points many girls will own, and yet be highly uninteresting and unattractive. Val's chief charm lay in her entire unconsciousness of herself, in the animated play of her mobile sensitive face, in which, as in her clear grey eyes, was reflected every emotion of her sympathetic nature. She was a girl who from impulse might probably act hastily

or thoughtlessly, but who would be only too ready to own her error if once convinced of it; a rare virtue indeed, for surely the hardest of all concessions is that which avows, "I was wrong."

Val's abrupt movement caused Lady Marchmont to look up enquiringly, and she divined the cause of her displeasure. The young lady had certain peculiar notions of her own, and did not like being joked about her love and her lover, especially before a third person. Ere Lady Marchmont, however, could atone for her indiscretion, another lady present looked up from her lace-work and said quietly:

"Is it not wonderful how ready we women are to trust our happiness and our future in the hands of men, of whom for the most part we know little?"

The speaker was a slight fair woman whose age it would be difficult to guess. She was one of those persons whom one would at first declare to be quite unattractive, and shortly discover that they possess a strange fascination. Whether it was her peculiarly clear low-toned voice, or a certain air of quiet self-possession which nothing seemed to ruffle, it was undeniable that Mrs. Maitland had had her share of admirers, and in this, her third year of widowhood, was said to have received more than one offer to change her apparently not inconsolable state.

Val glanced at her with a slightly contemptuous look in her eyes.

"Your remark has no significance for me, Mrs. Maitland, for I know Captain Dalrymple thoroughly," she said with a happy confidence in her tone. A slight smile played for a moment round Mrs. Maitland's thin lips, and she dropped her eyes again over her work.

"Oh, you think you do," she answered in her quiet tones, which somehow or other generally had the effect of irritating Val, "which does as well—nay, better, for few of us would benefit by an intimate knowledge of the lives of most men."

"The life of every honourable man is the same," returned Val indignantly. "Your experience of the other sex must have been unfortunate, Mrs. Maitland."

There was a slight accession of colour in the widow's usually impassive cheek as she replied in a somewhat sarcastic tone: "I admire, if I do not emulate, your charming confidence, Miss Charteris. I hope you may never have cause to regret it, but I think when you are a few years older you will

acknowledge that men are all alike, and that self is the guiding star of their existence."

"I refuse to believe it," said Val. "You are welcome to your opinion, Mrs. Maitland; leave me in the enjoyment of mine. There are bad alike in both sexes, but what does it matter if there are worthless men, when the one in whom one trusts and believes is all he should be?" and with this Val turned her back on her antagonist, and dropping into an easy-chair, gave herself up to a mental revision of the virtues of her "*chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*."

What sweet smiles circled her lips, what a happy light shone in her eyes, as she lived over again that brief period of wooing, when the old story, that is ever so new in the telling, was whispered into her willing ears. Oh, bright time of youth and love that comes but once to all, that passes all too swiftly, but which years after has still the power to rekindle a flame in our worn-out weary hearts!

"Val," said Lady Marchmont, breaking in on her reverie, as she bent over her and spoke in a low tone, "where are your thoughts? I hear the dog-cart going round to the front door."

Val brought herself back from a delightful past to a still more delightful present, and sat up in an expectant attitude with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks.

In a few minutes the door was flung open and Captain Dalrymple was announced. He was a tall, soldierly-looking man, with a grave serious face and dark earnest eyes, which, when he smiled, softened and lit up in a wonderfully attractive manner.

In the presence of the two ladies, Valérie's greeting with him was necessarily restrained, a silent, but expressive pressure of the hands, and Captain Dalrymple turned to Lady Marchmont. "I have to thank you for your great kindness in extending to me your invitation to Val."

"I am only too delighted to see you," answered Lady Marchmont heartily; "and for the rest, you know Val would not have consented to come, if you had not also favoured us with your company."

As she spoke, she half-turned towards Mrs. Maitland with the intention of introducing her, when to Val's astonishment that lady came forward, holding out her hand, as she said with her most fascinating smile:

"There is no need for an introduction, Lady Marchmont; Captain Dalrymple and I are old friends."

Val turned her gaze to her lover's face, and saw there an expression that she could

not exactly fathom. Was it surprise, annoyance, or embarrassment? He seemed for a moment somewhat at a loss for a reply.

"I did not expect to meet you," he said at length.

"The unexpected always happens, you know," replied Mrs. Maitland, laughing.

What did it mean? Val asked herself. That they should be acquainted with each other was not wonderful, but why had Mrs. Maitland been silent on the point towards her, and above all, why should her presence apparently disconcert Vernon in some way?

She had not time to ponder further on the subject, for the next moment Captain Dalrymple turned to her with his attractive smile, under the influence of which Val's disquietude melted instantly. How absurd to worry about such a thing, when of course at the first opportunity Vernon would explain it all! This thought revived her spirits, and when a few minutes later the party was swelled by some other guests staying at the Hall, she was the gayest of the gay, enjoying delightful little asides with Captain Dalrymple which enabled her totally to forget the existence of Mrs. Maitland.

"Meet me in the drawing-room before anyone is down," she whispered to him as they separated to dress for dinner.

"All right, darling," he replied as he smiled down on her with those eloquent dark eyes that had won her heart's allegiance.

Captain Dalrymple performed his toilet in a very short space of time, and repaired at once to the drawing-room, there to await Val. He wandered into the conservatory and paced about restlessly. One of the glass doors opening close by him caused him to turn quickly with a smile of welcome on his lips, when to his utter surprise he found himself confronted by Mrs. Maitland.

She came quickly forward with the quiet gliding walk which was peculiar to her, but her habitual self-possession seemed strangely ruffled.

"I must apologise for thus intruding on you," she said, "but there was something I wish particularly to ask you."

"Indeed!" returned Captain Dalrymple. His voice had taken its coldest intonation, his face wore its gravest aspect.

"Don't look at me like that, Vernon, as though my presence were so utterly distasteful to you," she went on with some agitation, whether real or feigned he could not determine. "I shall not detain you

long. What I want to ask of you is that you will not mention to Miss Charteris what took place between us a year ago."

"Do you think it likely, Mrs. Maitland, I should mention the subject?"

"Not intentionally, perhaps, but these things come out sometimes unawares, and I could not bear to be subjected to Miss Charteris's ridicule and scorn."

"You need, I assure you, have no fear. I shall be silent on that score."

"You will give me your sacred promise to that effect, will you not?" she said eagerly.

He looked at her in surprise. "I fail to understand you, Mrs. Maitland, but since my simple assurance does not satisfy you, I am quite willing to pledge you my word."

As he spoke the drawing-room door opened softly and Val appeared on the threshold. The room was a very long one, and Dalrymple, standing in the conservatory with his back turned that way, did not see or hear her. Not so Mrs. Maitland. True she did not glance in the direction, but she knew perfectly well who had entered.

She dropped her voice, but advanced a few steps nearer to him.

"I cannot thank you sufficiently," she said, looking at him most eloquently; "you do not know what a weight you have lifted from my mind."

As she spoke, she took both his hands in hers, and giving them a tender pressure, turned, and disappeared through the door by which she had entered, leaving Captain Dalrymple gazing after her with a very perplexed countenance.

"What is the meaning of this?" he pondered. "I never could fathom that woman. How unfortunate she should be here now."

Ere he turned to re-enter the drawing-room, Val, who had stood at the open door motionless during these few minutes, slowly drew it to after her, and crept upstairs again, with a strange chill at her heart.

Mrs. Maitland likewise hastened to regain her room.

"How well I calculated," she murmured to herself, a triumphant light shining in her cold blue eyes; "that was a good move of mine. I knew she would want some explanation with her lover relative to our meeting. She will be still more anxious for it now, and he will refuse to give it, for he has promised, and Vernon Dalrymple never goes back from his word. How I hate that girl with her confidence and pride in his love! Let us see if her trust of

which she boasts will stand her now in good stead. Who knows but what I may win him yet? At any rate I shall make her suffer."

Meanwhile Vernon, as yet in happy ignorance of the trouble Fate was preparing for him, had given up all hope of his tête-à-tête with Val, as one after another the guests assembled in the drawing-room, she only making her appearance a few minutes before dinner was announced. At the first touch of her fingers on his arm as they went in to dinner, he felt that something was wrong. He glanced at her earnestly, but her face was averted.

"What made you forget your appointment with me, dear?" he asked in low tones as they seated themselves at table.

"I did not forget," answered Val, scorning to make an excuse.

"No!" in some surprise. "I suppose something detained you then. I will forgive you this time, but I don't know that I shall be so lenient again," and he smiled tenderly down on her. To his dismay it won no response.

Val had not yet recovered from the unpleasant shock her feelings had received, but she was too angry, too puzzled to clearly define her thoughts; she was chiefly conscious of an intense hatred and jealousy of Mrs. Maitland. It was scarcely wonderful that she should be silent and abstracted during dinner, but the party was too large and too animated for this to be noticed save by two of its members.

"Dalrymple," said Sir Harry Marchmont, claiming that gentleman's attention, "I was introduced to-day to a brother of yours. Did you know he was in these parts?"

"My brother Hubert, I suppose? I remember now his telling me he was going to stay with some friends of his, the Sinclairs, but I did not know their place was near here."

"Only half an hour's drive," returned Sir Harry. "He's a confoundedly handsome fellow—I should say a great favourite with the fair sex. I asked him over to breakfast to-morrow and to spend the day. He told me he had not yet made the acquaintance of his future sister-in-law."

"No, to be sure. Hubert is the only one of us you don't know," said Vernon, turning to Val. "I think you will like him. He's an awfully good-natured fellow, a little spoilt perhaps, but, according to Sir Harry, that is hardly to be wondered at."

Val's face, however, plainly expressed

entire indifference to Hubert Dalrymple's merits or demerits.

When the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, Dalrymple made his way at once to Val, who was sitting somewhat apart, and bending over her, said in a low tone:

"What is amiss with you, dear? You do not seem yourself this evening."

It was likely, Val thought, that she should be herself, when she had seen that creature, as she inwardly designated Mrs. Maitland, standing by his side, holding his hands, and making eyes at him positively as though she had the right to do so! She could bear it no longer, she must have an explanation at once, she resolved.

"Come out on the terrace," she said, rising impetuously. "I want to speak to you."

He followed her obediently, and when they were beyond sight or hearing of anyone, said gently:

"Well, what is troubling you, dear?"

"What is there between you and Mrs. Maitland?" asked Val, fixing her clear glance on him, as she abruptly plunged "in medias res."

Captain Dalrymple regarded her in unfeigned astonishment. "What is there between Mrs. Maitland and me?" he repeated slowly. "My dear Val, I don't understand you."

"And I don't understand you," hotly responded the young lady. "You cannot deny, Vernon, that when you met Mrs. Maitland, you looked very—very taken aback."

"I have no wish to deny anything, Val," he answered; "it is true I was somewhat surprised to see Mrs. Maitland."

"But why should you be more surprised to see her than any other acquaintance?"

Dalrymple heaved a faint sigh; matters were getting serious.

"My dear Val," he said half-playfully, "you are surely not going to quarrel with me on account of Mrs. Maitland. I did not think you were given to jealousy."

"Jealousy!" repeated Val, giving her disturbed feelings full vent. "I have a right to be jealous, I think, when I see another woman, whom I did not even know to be acquainted with you, holding an interview with you of apparently a most intimate nature."

So here was the explanation of Val's conduct! Dalrymple looked, what he felt, thoroughly aghast.

"I see," he said after a moment's pause,

"that you have more cause for annoyance than I imagined. If I cannot give you a very full explanation of what I am aware must appear strange in your eyes, I am sure your confidence in me will enable you to accept without hesitation what I am going to say. I have known Mrs. Maitland for years, and she wished to speak to me alone on a matter that concerns herself."

"And it was necessary to the communication that she should hold your hands?" asked Val sarcastically.

Dalrymple looked at her with his searching eyes.

"I see what is in your mind, Val," he answered quietly, "but I can hardly believe that you can mistrust me thus, that you can wrong yourself and insult me by such suspicions. Were I free to do so, I would willingly explain all, but unfortunately I am not."

"Because you have promised her not to do so, I suppose?" returned Val, her eyes flashing; "and a promise to her is to rank before consideration of my feelings. After what I witnessed this evening I have a right to demand a full explanation, and I will accept that or none." Saying which she reared her head with the dignity of a queen, and left Captain Dalrymple alone to ponder over the unforeseen dilemma in which he found himself placed.

The flush of anger still lingered on Val's cheek as she re-entered the room, and Mrs. Maitland noting it with her watchful eyes, smiled maliciously as she said to herself: "I score the first points in the game."

Val awoke the next morning with a dull aching pain at her heart, the cause of which she only too soon remembered. Of trouble of any kind she had hitherto had no experience, and she felt quite overwhelmed at the dreary prospect before her should she continue her quarrel with Vernon. Why not put an end to it, she asked herself, and trust him, as she had been so ready to declare she could do under any circumstances? Then the thought that he had a secret with Mrs. Maitland, which was unshared by her, obtruded itself, and she grew obdurate again.

She remained in her room till summoned by the breakfast-bell, and then slipped into a place at table which hid her from Vernon's sight.

Hubert Dalrymple was of the party. He was certainly very handsome, with dark eyes, which wore a languid sleepy look in them very well suited to his style. For all that, he was observant, and could see

as much with his half-closed eyes as most people with theirs wide open, and he had not been many minutes at table ere he perceived something was seriously wrong between his brother and his betrothed.

Breakfast over he approached Val, and said with a smile wonderfully like Vernon's:

"Come for a stroll with me, will you? As we are so soon to be related it is only natural I should wish to be better acquainted with you."

Val was fain to consent. She was only too anxious to escape from Vernon's presence; the misery of being with him and yet estranged from him was more than she could bear.

After wandering about for awhile, Hubert making vain attempts to amuse Val with his light talk, they seated themselves on a shady bench, and the former said without further preface:

"What is there wrong between you and Vernon?"

Val flushed crimson. "I don't understand you," she said.

"Don't you?" answered Hubert in his lazy tones. "I should have thought my meaning pretty clear. I'm not a very clever fellow, Miss Charteris, but it did not require very bright wits to discover there was something amiss."

Val made no rejoinder, in truth she was experiencing some difficulty in keeping from tears.

"I think it such a pity for people to fall out about trifles," proceeded Hubert, "for knowing Vernon as I do, I can't believe he can have given you any real cause for complaint. There's not a better fellow breathing than he; I, as his brother, ought to be able to give an opinion on the subject."

Still Val sat silent; she felt half-inclined to be angry with this officious young man for his interference in her private affairs, but somehow, in spite of all, it was so sweet to hear Vernon praised.

"You won't be offended with me, I hope, if I tell you I think you are very lucky to have won his love," continued Mr. Dalrymple, in no way discomposed at having all the talk to himself. "Vernon's not like me, you know. I can't help spooning every pretty girl I come across, but with him, you are just the first woman he has ever loved or spoken to of love."

Val turned to him eagerly. "Are you sure—quite sure?"

Mr. Dalrymple laid his handsome head back against the tree, and surveyed her from under his half-closed lids with an expression of amusement. "I think I see

light at last," he mused; "the little girl is jealous—I fancy I know of whom."

"Quite sure," he said aloud; "but that has not prevented many women being in love with him. There's a certain lady, not a dozen miles from here, who tried very hard to win him."

"Do you mean Mrs. Maitland?" asked Val in a low hurried tone.

"What makes you guess that?"

"Because—oh, because I have been very unhappy through her," said Val, clasping her hands together with a pathetic little gesture, her grey eyes full of tears.

"Tell me all about it," responded Hubert tenderly, and to Val's surprise she found herself detailing her grievance to this young man, who an hour ago had been unknown to her. As she concluded she was somewhat taken aback at Mr. Dalrymple's giving vent to a hearty fit of laughter.

"How deep the little widow is," he said; "but I see her game. She thought to make a quarrel between you and Vernon and perhaps gain his heart in the rebound. Valérie, you really deserve to know the truth, especially after confiding in me. Listen to me. A year ago, Mrs. Maitland, reversing the general order of things, made an offer to Vernon of her hand, heart, and very ample fortune."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Val.

"Not impossible—unusual, if you like," answered Hubert dryly. "We have known her for years, and she was always awfully sweet on Vernon. When she became her own mistress again, she began running after him in the old fashion, and last year—we were all staying together at some house—she spoke out pretty plainly."

"However do you know?" asked Val.

"Because I, by chance, interrupted the interesting tête-à-tête, and guessed from the lady's agitation what had taken place. When I taxed Vernon with it afterwards he could not deny it, but naturally, on her account, he would think himself in honour bound never to mention it, for she must have been very genuinely in love with him to go such lengths. Wasn't it awkward for him?" wound up Hubert. "If it had happened to me, I should have accepted her, for I can never refuse a woman anything."

Val caught his hands impetuously in hers.

"How can I thank you," she said, the happy smiles playing again round her lips.

"I was so angry, so miserable, I did not know what to think, and now everything is delightful again. Vernon said I should like you, and I do, tremendously."

"Thanks," returned Hubert, laughing, "I am glad to be able to return the compliment. And now don't you think you had better make your peace with Vernon, or you will have a certain fair lady carrying tales to him about the violent flirtation we are indulging in."

A few minutes later, Vernon, sitting alone in the library, apparently engaged in writing letters, but with a preoccupied air that boded ill for his correspondence, felt two soft arms steal round his neck, and Val's sweet voice said in his ear:

"Can you ever forgive me, dear, for being such a horrid suspicious wretch? I was so wrong, so very wrong, but I punished myself more than any one."

Vernon's face brightened as he drew her tenderly to him.

"You have made up your mind to trust me in spite of appearances, Val?" he asked.

She hid her glowing face on his shoulder.

"I must tell you all," she whispered, "and don't despise me very much, dear." And she proceeded to recount her conversation with Hubert.

"Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner—eh, Val?" he said with a slight smile; "but there, I won't tease you, dear. It was hardly surprising you were vexed, and wanted to know all, and I think I need not ask you to keep silent on the score of what you have heard."

"I promise," said Val, feeling in her newly-recovered happiness that she could pardon Mrs. Maitland all her misdoings, since it was love for Vernon which had prompted her to them.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXVII. THE PROPOSAL.

It had never happened to him before. The first thought that came upon Mr. Prosper, when he got into his carriage, was that it had never occurred to him before. He did not reflect that he had not put himself in the way of it; but now the strangeness of the sensation overwhelmed him. He enquired of himself whether it was pleasant, but he found himself compelled to answer the question with a negative. It should have come from him, but not yet; not yet, probably, for some weeks. But it had been done, and by the doing of it she had sealed him utterly as her own. There was no getting out of it now. He did feel that he ought not to attempt to get out of it after what had taken place. He was not sure but that the lady had planned it all with that purpose; but he was sure that a strong foundation had been laid for a breach of promise case if he were to attempt to escape. What might not a jury do against him, giving damages out of the acres of Buston Hall? And then Miss Thoroughbung would go over to the other Thoroughbungs and to the Annesleys, and his condition would become intolerable. In some moments as he was driven home he was not sure but that it had all been got up as a plot against him by the Annesleys.

When he got out of his carriage Matthew knew that things had gone badly with his master. But he could not conjecture in what way. The matter had been fully debated in the kitchen, and it had been there decided that Miss Thoroughbung was certainly to be brought home as the future mistress of Buston. The step to be taken

by their master was not popular in the Buston kitchen. It had been there considered that Master Harry was to be the future master, and, by some perversity of intellect they had all thought that this would occur soon. Matthew was much older than the squire, who was hardly to be called a sickly man, and yet Matthew had made up his mind that Mr. Harry was to reign over him as Squire of Buston. When, therefore, the tidings came that Miss Thoroughbung was to be brought to Buston as the mistress, there had been some slight symptoms of rebellion. "They didn't want any 'Tilda Thoroughbung there.'" They had their own idea of a lady and a gentleman, which, as in all such cases, was perfectly correct. They knew the squire to be a fool, but they believed him to be a gentleman. They heard that Miss Thoroughbung was a clever woman, but they did not believe her to be a lady. Matthew had said a few words to the cook as to a public-house at Stevenage. She had told him not to be an old fool, and that he would lose his money, but she had thought of the public-house. There had been a mutinous feeling. Matthew helped his master out of the carriage, and then came a revulsion. That "froth of a beer-barrel," as Matthew had dared to call her, had absolutely refused his master.

Mr. Prosper went into the house very meditative, and sad at heart. It was a matter almost of regret to him that it had not been as Matthew supposed. But he was caught and bound and must make the best of it. He thought of all the particulars of her proposed mode of living, and recapitulated them to himself. A pair of ponies, her own maid, champagne, the fishmonger's bill, and Miss Tickle. Miss Puffie would certainly not have required such expensive luxuries. Champagne and the fish would

require company for their final consumption. The ponies assumed a tone of being quite opposed to that which he had contemplated. He questioned with himself whether he would like Miss Tickle as a perpetual inmate. He had, in sheer civility, expressed a liking for Miss Tickle, but what need could there be to a married woman of a Miss Tickle? And then he thought of the education of the five or six children which she had almost promised him! He had suggested to himself simply an heir,—just one heir,—so that the nefarious Harry might be cut out. He already saw that he would not be enriched to the extent of a shilling by the lady's income. Then there would be all the trouble and the disgrace of a separate purse. He felt that there would be disgrace in having the fish and champagne which were consumed in his own house paid for by his wife without reference to him. What if the lady had a partiality for champagne! He knew nothing about it, and would know nothing about it, except when he saw it in her heightened colour. Despatched crabs for supper! He always went to bed at ten, and had a tumbler of barley-water brought to him,—a glass of barley-water with just a squeeze of lemon-juice.

He saw ruin before him. No doubt she was a good manager, but she would be a good manager for herself. Would it not be better for him to stand the action for breach of promise, and betake himself to Miss Puffie? But Miss Puffie was fifty, and there could be no doubt that the lady ought to be younger than the gentleman. He was much distressed in mind. If he broke off with Miss Thoroughbung, ought he to do so at once, before she had had time to put the matter into the hands of the lawyer? And on what plea should he do it? Before he went to bed that night he did draw out a portion of a letter, which, however, was never sent.

"MY DEAR MISS THOROUGHBUG,—In the views which we both promulgated this morning I fear that there was some essential misunderstanding as to the mode of life which had occurred to both of us. You, as was so natural at your age, and with all your charms, have not been slow to anticipate a coming period of unchequered delights. Your allusion to a pony-carriage, and other incidental allusions,"—he did not think it well to mention more particularly the fish and champagne,—“have made clear the sort of future life which you have pictured to yourself. Heaven forbid that I

should take upon myself to find fault with anything so pleasant and so innocent. But my prospects of life are different, and in seeking the honour of an alliance with you I was looking for a quiet companion in my declining years, and it might be also to a mother to a possible future son. When you honoured me with an unmistakable sign of your affection, on my going, I was just about to explain all this. You must excuse me if my mouth was then stopped by the mutual ardour of our feeling. I was about to say——” But he had found it difficult to explain what he had been about to say, and on the next morning, when the time for writing had come, he heard news which detained him for the day, and then the opportunity was gone.

On the following morning when Matthew appeared at his bed-side with his cup of tea at nine o'clock, tidings were brought him. He took in the *Buntingford Gazette*, which came twice a week, and as Matthew laid it, opened and unread, in its accustomed place, he gave the information, which he had no doubt gotten from the paper. “You haven't heard it, sir, I suppose, as yet?”

“Heard what?”

“About Miss Puffie.”

“What about Miss Puffie? I haven't heard a word. What about Miss Puffie?” He had been thinking that moment of Miss Puffie—of how she would be superior to Miss Thoroughbung in many ways. So that he sat up in his bed, holding the untasted tea in his hand.

“She's gone off with young Farmer Tazlehurst.”

“Miss Puffie gone off, and with her father's tenant's son!”

“Yes, indeed, sir. She and her father have been quarrelling for the last ten years, and now she's off. She was always riding and roistering about the country with them dogs and them men; and now she's gone.”

“Oh, Heavens!” exclaimed the squire, thinking of his own escape.

“Yes, indeed, sir. There's no knowing what any one of them is up to. Unless they gets married afore they're thirty, or thirty-five at most, they're most sure to get such ideas into their head as no one can mostly approve.” This had been intended by Matthew as a word of caution to his master, but had really the opposite effect. He resolved at the moment that the latter should not be said of Miss Thoroughbung.

And he turned Matthew out of the room with a flea in his ear. "How dare you to speak in that way of your betters? Mr. Puffie, the lady's father, has for many years been my friend. I am not saying anything of the lady, nor saying that she has done right. Of course, downstairs, in the servants'-hall, you can say what you please; but up here, in my presence, you should not speak in such language of a lady behind whose chair you may be called upon to wait."

"Very well, sir; I won't no more," said Matthew, retiring with mock humility. But he had shot his bolt, and he supposed successfully. He did not know what had taken place between his master and Miss Thoroughbung; but he did think that his speech might assist in preventing a repetition of the offer.

Miss Puffie gone off with the tenant's son! The news made matrimony doubly dangerous to him, and yet robbed him of the chief reason by which he was to have been driven to send her a letter. He could not, at any rate, now fall back upon Miss Puffie. And he thought that nothing would have induced Miss Thoroughbung to go off with one of the carters from the brewery. Whatever faults she might have they did not lie in that direction. Champagne and ponies were, as faults, less deleterious.

Miss Puffie gone off with young Tazlehurst; a lady of fifty, with a young man of twenty-five! And she the reputed heiress of Snickham Manor! It was a comfort to him as he remembered that Snickham Manor had been bought no longer ago than by the father of the present owner. The Prosper's had been at Buston ever since the time of George the First. You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. He had been ever assuring himself of that fact, which was now more of a fact than ever. And fifty years old! It was quite shocking. With a steady middle-aged man like himself, and with the approval of her family, marriage might have been thought of. But with this harum-scarum young tenant's son, who was in no respect a gentleman, whose only thought was of galloping over hedges and ditches, such an idea showed a state of mind which,—well,—absolutely disgusted him. Mr. Prosper, because he had grown old himself, could not endure to think that others, at his age, should retain a smack of their youth. There are ladies, besides Miss Puffie, who like to

ride across the country with a young man before them, or perhaps following; and never think much of their fifty years.

But the news certainly brought to him a great change of feeling,—so that the letter to which he had devoted the preceding afternoon was put back into the letter-case, and was never finished. And his mind immediately recurred to Miss Thoroughbung, and he bethought himself that the objection which he felt was, perhaps, in part frivolous. At any rate she was a better woman than Miss Puffie. She certainly would run after no farmer's son. Though she might be fond of champagne, it was, he thought, chiefly for other people. Though she was ambitious of ponies, the ambition might be checked. At any rate she could pay for her own ponies, whereas Mr. Puffie was a very hale old man of seventy. Puffie, he told himself, had married young, and might live for the next ten years, or twenty. To Mr. Prosper, whose imagination did not fly far afield, the world afforded at present but two ladies. These were Miss Puffie and Miss Thoroughbung, and as Miss Puffie had fallen out of the running, there seemed to be a walk over for Miss Thoroughbung.

He did think, during the two or three days which passed without any further step on his part,—he did think how it might be were he to remain unmarried. As regarded his own comfort, he was greatly tempted. Life would remain so easy to him! But then duty demanded of him that he should marry, and he was a man who, in honest sober talk, thought much of his duty. He was absurdly credulous, and as obstinate as a mule. But he did wish to do what was right. He had been convinced that Harry Annealey was a false knave, and had been made to swear an oath that Harry should not be his heir. Harry had been draped in the blackest colours, and to each daub of black something darker had been added by his uncle's memory of those neglected sermons. It was now his first duty in life to beget an heir, and for that purpose a wife must be had.

Putting aside the ponies and the champagne—and the despatched crab, the sound of which, as coming to him from Miss Tickle's mouth, was uglier than the other sounds—he still thought that Miss Thoroughbung would answer his purpose. From her side there would not be the making of a silk purse; but then "the

boy" would be his boy as well as hers, and would probably take more after the father. He passed much of these days with the Peerage in his hand, and satisfied himself that the best blood had been maintained frequently by second-rate marriages. Health was a great thing. Health in the mother was everything. Who could be more healthy than Miss Thoroughbung? Then he thought of that warm embrace. Perhaps, after all, it was right that she should embrace him after what he had said to her.

Three days only had passed by, and he was still thinking what ought to be his next step, when there came to him a letter from Messrs. Soames and Simpson, attorneys in Buntingford. He had heard of Messrs. Soames and Simpson, had been familiar with their names for the last twenty years, but had never dreamed that his own private affairs should become a matter of consultation in their office. Messrs. Grey and Barry, of Lincoln's Inn, were his lawyers, who were quite gentlemen. He knew nothing against Messrs. Soames and Simpson, but he thought that their work consisted generally in the recovery of local debts. Messrs. Soames and Simpson now wrote to him with full details as to his future life. Their client, Miss Thoroughbung, had communicated to them his offer of marriage. They were acquainted with all the lady's circumstances, and she had asked them for their advice. They had proposed to her that the use of her own income should be by deed left to herself. Some proportion of it should go into the house, and might be made matter of agreement. They suggested that an annuity of a thousand pounds a year, in shape of dower, should be secured to their client in the event of her outliving Mr. Prosper. The estate should, of course, be settled on the eldest child. The mother's property should be equally divided among the other children. Buston Hall should be the residence of the widow till the eldest son should be twenty-four, after which Mr. Prosper would no doubt feel that their client would have to provide a home for herself. Messrs. Soames and Simpson did not think that there was anything in this to which Mr. Prosper would object, and if this were so, they would immediately prepare the settlement. "That woman didn't say against it, after all," said Matthew to himself as he gave the letter from the lawyers to his master.

The letter made Mr. Prosper very angry.

It did, in truth, contain nothing more than a repetition of the very terms which the lady had herself suggested; but coming to him through these local lawyers, it was doubly distasteful. What was he to do? He felt it to be out of the question to accede at once. Indeed, he had a strong repugnance to putting himself into communication with the Buntingford lawyers. Had the matter been other than it was, he would have gone to the rector for advice. The rector generally advised him. But that was out of the question now. He had seen his sister once since his visit to Buntingford, but had said nothing to her about it. Indeed, he had been anything but communicative, so that Mrs. Annealey had been forced to leave him with a feeling almost of offence. There was no help to be had in that quarter, and he could only write to Mr. Grey, and ask that gentleman to assist him in his difficulties.

He did write to Mr. Grey, begging for his immediate attention. "There is that fool Prosper going to marry a brewer's daughter down at Buntingford," said Mr. Grey to his daughter.

"He's sixty years old."

"No, my love. He looks it, but he's only fifty. A man at fifty is supposed to be young enough to marry. There's a nephew who has been brought up as his heir; that's the hard part of it. And the nephew is mixed up in some way with the Scarboroughs."

"Is it he who is to marry that young lady?"

"I think it is. And now there's some devil's play going on. I've got nothing to do with it."

"But you will have."

"Not a turn. Mr. Prosper can marry if he likes it. They have sent him most abominable proposals as to the lady's money; and as to her jointure, I must stop that if I can, though I suppose he is not such a fool as to give way."

"Is he soft?"

"Well, not exactly. He likes his own money. But he's a gentleman, and wants nothing but what is or ought to be his own."

"There are but few like that now."

"It's true of him. But then he does not know what is his own, or what ought to be. He's almost the biggest fool I have ever known, and will do an injustice to that boy simply from ignorance." Then he drafted his letter to Mr. Prosper, and gave it to Dolly to read. "That's what I shall

propose. The clerk can put it into proper language. He must offer less than he means to give."

"Is that honest, father?"

"It's honest on my part, knowing the people with whom I have to deal. If I were to lay down the strict minimum which he should grant, he would add other things which would cause him to act not in accordance with my advice. I have to make allowance for his folly,—a sort of windage which is not dishonest. Had he referred her lawyers to me I could have been as hard and honest as you please." All which did not quite satisfy Dolly's strict ideas of integrity.

But the terms proposed were that the lady's means should be divided so that one-half should go to herself for her own personal expenses, and the other half to her husband for the use of the house; that the lady should put up with a jointure of two hundred and fifty pounds, which ought to suffice when joined to her own property, and that the settlement among the children should be as recommended by Messrs. Soames and Simpson.

"And if there are not any children, papa."

"Then each will receive his or her own property."

"Because it may be so."

"Certainly, my dear; very probably."

NOTE.—The name "Thoroughbung" has hitherto been printed "Thoroughbury," owing to a misunderstanding arising from an accidental delay in the return to the printer of the author's proof.—ED. A. Y. R.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

X.

OH, the lovely summer nights in Skye! The gorgeous sunset in purple and gold, hardly cleared from the sky before the shy dawn blushes faintly in the east. The mountains seem to know no sleep, but watch in stately mystery all the livelong night, and the tide sways to and fro with restful murmur among the caves and crags, and ripples noiselessly about the winding lochs.

In the north you seem near the great mysteries of Nature. The cave of the winds must be somewhere between this and Iceland, and you seem to be approaching the head-waters of the mighty oceans. And then the wealth of the seas in teeming vigorous life. Now it is a shoal of herrings that flecks the bay with silver, while hosts of sea-birds follow it, swooping quickly here and there, or a salmon darts like a

streak of light for the loch, or a school of porpoises tumbles about in delight, or a whale has been seen hereabouts, and though you see it not, yet the expectation gives a delightful thrill of interest to the scene. You may surprise a mermaid in the shape of a fine motherly seal sunning herself on the sands of some sequestered inlet. And with all this, with this initiation to the mysteries of the deep sea, you have the calm and repose of an inland lake for all these long summer days. For beyond there to the west, like a massive break-water, lie the outer Hebrides, the ultima Thule, the last outworks in this direction of the old world, a refuge, too, for the last remains of the old popular mythology. Here in the Minch, as the sheltered sound is called, lie the Shiant Isles, where elves and fairies, it is said, still resort, and beyond, in the wild Atlantic, lie the Flannan Isles, the mystic seven hunters, where, tradition has it, once dwelt a pigmy race. Have we not the testimony of the worthy Dean of the Isles to the existence in his day of "a'ine little kirk of their ain handiwork," under the floor of which he delv'd up "certaine baines and round heads of wonderful little quantity, allegit to be the baines of the said pigmies." Nor did the worthy dean, as some allege, bring the story with him, and merely fix it in a local habitation. He had, no doubt, read Sir John Mandeville's travels and his account of the Pigmean Isle beyond the Indian mount. But, after all, the Highlanders had a Sindbad of their own, and could furnish forth a veritable Arabian Nights of native origin. Could have done, that is, while there was yet a Highland people, ere Duke Genghis and Earl Tamerlane had wasted the land and turned it into a hunting-ground.

Now all these were five o'clock in the morning reflections, for at that untimely hour we were all stirring—all except Mrs. Gillies, that is, who wisely kept to her bed—the object being a sail up the sound and a visit to Prince Charlie's Cave. It was the only chance we had of a sail in the Firefly, for we had made up our minds to start by the boat that same morning for Inverness by way of Strome Ferry.

Even Uncle Jock has fallen in with the notion. It will be something to talk about in St. Mary Axe when he gets back. And so we all embark in a crank little boat that seems a good many sizes too small for us, and are rowed out to the yacht, where we get greatly in the way during the operations of raising the anchor

and getting up sail. Perhaps one's nautical expressions are a little demoralised by life on board a steamer, but anyhow the meaning is plain.

Luckily there is a snug little cabin with coffee all hot, but then one sees nothing down below. And on deck there is an enormous boom that swings about from side to side, and interferes with perfect serenity of mind. And then some of us have not full confidence in the skipper—for the Firefly is navigated by her owner; he can't attend to his business properly and be talking all the while to Mary Grant. But it is certainly astonishing to see Angus Ross, the old timber-dealer, who throws himself with heart and soul into the business. You may see him taking a pull here and loosening a rope there while he eyes the spread of canvas knowingly, and he orders poor Ronald about—who had much rather be sitting down and talking to Jennie—as if he were the first officer addressing the cabin-boy.

There is a fresh breeze when we are once fairly in the sound, and the boat seems to stagger under her canvas; but the Honourable Jem likes to carry on, and we dash through the sea at a fine rate; Skye looking very grand in the clear morning air with its rugged precipices and tall peaks about which white morning mists are writhing. Only a stern sense of duty keeps us steadfast to Prince Charlie's Cave, the entrance to which has not an inviting appearance, but we make up our minds to land, and there being a little swell on the water the dingey is expected to make two trips to land us on the rocks. Of course the skipper takes advantage of his position, and tells me off into the first boat, which is to hold Uncle Jock, and Angus Ross and your humble servant. And he promises to follow himself with the two girls. Ronald takes an oar, and thus solves his part of the problem. However, in landing from the boat, Uncle Jock managed to slip on the wet rocks and turned a back-somersault into about thirty feet depth of water, all sparkling and crystal clear as it was, but not pleasant to tumble into without notice. Next moment I saw that Ronald had slipped into the water like an otter. There was a moment of breathless suspense—the sea had swallowed the two men; would it ever give them up till the last day? A minute passed—another, and still the waters gave no sign—another few moments, and both may be past praying for. And then a wet

glistening head is seen to rise some yards distant from the shore, and next moment we are hauling away at Uncle Jock wherever we can get hold of him, for Ronald, who has brought him to the surface, has not strength enough to land him. The healthy fresh-coloured face of a few minutes ago is white as wax now, the teeth tight clenched, and the nostrils drawn in; but with rubbing and rolling, ere long the bulk of the man is stirred by a long-drawn sigh.

"Ye'd a narrow squeak of it, there now," says Angus, patting the man's shoulder as he sits up and stares vaguely about him, "but we'll have you righted in a minute." And indeed, when Jock has had a pull at the whisky-flask, and thus qualified some of the water he has swallowed, he looks about him in a quite perky way, and expresses a desire to be dried up as quickly as possible.

The people in the yacht have hardly made out the incident. They can't think it was anything serious, only a water frolic as far as they can see. But Jennie is greatly distressed when her uncle is brought aboard all limp and streaming with water. And it is pleasant to see that in the emotion of the moment all little tiffs are forgotten, and Jock and his niece sit together hand in hand for a minute looking at each other with tender affection. And a proud and happy girl she is when she finds who it is to whom her uncle owes his life this day.

There is no more thought of landing for the cave, but we run along the coast, catching glimpses of strange fantastic arrangements in rocks and basaltic columns, till we are fairly into the broad Minch and standing away directly for the North Pole. There is great fun now about Uncle Jock's patchwork travelling-suit, for he has been rigged out in all kinds of odd garments—a blue jersey, with Firefly embroidered on the front, an odd pair of white slops, and a pilot-jacket.

And then ship is bouted, if that is allowable in nautical language, and we run back to Portree, just in time to get ourselves and our belongings, including Mrs. Gillies—who has really bestirred herself and got all our affairs settled in Skye—on board the little Glencoe, that is waiting with her steam up and whistling violently. Angus Ross is with us too, for he is bound to Inverness, and indeed there is quite a number of people all for the same destination; cer-

tainly something quite out of the line in the way of local traffic. And then we ascertain the cause. There is a great wool fair to open next day at Inverness, and all the world is tending in that one direction.

Perhaps the route we have chosen is not the best; had we more time to spare we should take the route by steamer northwards to Gairloch, and then by coach along Loch Maree, and so join the railway at a point much nearer Inverness. But in that way we should only reach the Highland capital by Wednesday evening. The time might be profitably spent in Skye, which abounds in scenes of wild and rugged grandeur. Loch Scavaig, with its desolate sublimity, and the quaint and monstrous grouping of Quirring, might each occupy a day. But the fates will it otherwise. And so

Farewell lovely Skye, to lake, mountain, and river.

Poor Jennie is bidding also farewell to Ronald, and possibly a long farewell, with no future meeting absolutely certain. They had a rehearsal, I think, of the parting, on board the yacht, under the friendly cover of the foresail, a rehearsal, perhaps, more satisfactory than the public performance under the eyes of all the world of Skye. A friendly little world, nevertheless, that is now waving adieux, some on the quay and some on the heights; and then we round the headland and lose sight of it all.

Our passage to Strome Ferry is on the same track as our approach to Skye, but naturally in the reverse direction; but it is all fresh and charming in the pure morning air. And when we leave Broadford we strike across to Loch Carron instead of heading for the narrows through which we sailed the other day. At Broadford got on board a little old gentleman who was a burning enthusiast on the subject of Dr. Johnson. He had been told that the great lexicographer had slept in a certain house near Broadford, and he was wild with anxiety to be shown that house. The sailors did not know much about it. "Was it Doctor Shonson; her was not known much about the gentleman." The captain shook his head and appeared much engrossed in the navigation of the ship. "It's very extraordinary," said the little old gentleman with withering contempt, "very extraordinary that nobody should know the house where Dr. Johnson slept." And then he accosted Uncle Jock. "You seem

to know the country, sir; don't you know the house where Dr. Johnson slept?" To which Jock, who wanted to put the little old gentleman at his ease, replied that it was a long time since, and perhaps the house was pulled down. "Pooh! pulled down! nonsense!" cried the little man, muttering as he moved away in search of better information: "Never heard of such crass ignorance." "And why doesn't he know himself?" roared Uncle Jock quite angrily. "Was it a great honour he did to the Heelands when he slept there, and what else should he do, the good doctor, what should he do but sleep when it was night?" Mary Grant was delighted with this little scene; sitting snugly behind her uncle's elbow and watching all that was going on. There was no getting a word from her this morning. Why could we not begin again where we left off the night before when we had been so delightfully friendly and confidential? But no, to-day she was all shyness and coyness.

There was a capital old lady on board who was given to sketching, a plucky old dame evidently, for she was travelling all alone, and seemed perfectly self-contained and isolated. But when she saw a boat or a ship, then she made a little drawing of a ship or boat; a conventional craft not resembling in the least the model. In the same way she had her ideal of an inn or a mansion, and she was very careful always to have the right number of windows. But she was not equally accurate about chimneys. One at each end was the regulation with her houses, and she wasn't going to alter it, if foolish people contrived to put their chimneys in the middle. I had just brought Mary Grant to have a peep at the sketch-book, when the diligent old Johnsonian accosted the fair artist, having just succeeded in working round to her. "Madam, among your sketches have you one of the house that Dr. Johnson slept in?" And the dame shut her book in a great hurry, and looked apprehensively at the enquirer, unable to utter a word. "Don't be alarmed, ma'am," cried the little man; "I'm not a wandering lunatic, ma'am, as you seem to think; I only thought that somebody might have heard something of the great Dr. Johnson, but I see I'm mistaken. Good-morning, ma'am."

But, indeed, it is curious to note that, according to the guide-books, about three people have visited the Highlands within

the last few centuries. Prince Charlie, first of all, who seems to have slept mostly among caves and rocks; then Dr. Johnson, who was lucky enough to have a Boswell to write his itinerary; and, finally, our most gracious Queen, whose various resting-places are chronicled with much minuteness by the historian of the district.

Meanwhile there is a great gabble of voices from the farmers and factors who are on their way to Inverness. "Wass the sheep strong, Donald?" "Aye, indeed, wass they strong." For this fair, I am told, is for sheep as well as wool, and quite unique in this line, inasmuch as all the sheep are sold upon honour—not one of the animals being present in propria persona—and bargains to a large amount being concluded on the faith of the owner's description of his flocks. And so the talk is all of sheep on board the boat. And presently, when we land and make our way to the little station, the terminus of the Highland line, we find more farmers and much more gabble of voices, and Gaelic and English all mixed together, with kilted men and booted men, and drovers and dealers, and greetings and hearty hand-shakings all along the line.

It is three o'clock when the train starts on its tortuous way among the hills. And the day is now overcast and rain begins to fall, while mist and vapour obscure the outlines of the mountains. We feel that we are lucky to be comfortably settled in our corners and sheltered from the driving showers. And then having begun the day so early everybody is rather sleepy and tired, excepting Angus Ross, indeed, who is as hard as nails, and seems to find rest and refreshment in the sound of his own voice. And so we rattle on at moderate speed passing dreary little stations with long Gaelic names, Auchnashellach and Achnasheen, for instance, and some of us have comfortable naps and dreamy snatches of slumber, till Dingwall rouses us up with its briny breezes from the German Ocean. And the grey-looking firth is spanned by a rainbow, and the sun presently shows in bright patches on the waters; and presently beneath the bow of light we catch a glimpse of Inverness, grey, too, and solid, clean-looking and substantial, and we are in all the bustle of the station, with rival omnibuses from all the hotels, and the conductors clamouring for our custom.

And the streets are thronged with brawny

men; and there are kilts in plenty, and pipers with pipes fluttering with ribbons; while in front of the Caledonian, where we take up our quarters, and which seems to be the general mustering-place of the clans, there are two long rows of benches crammed with sturdy Scots, and the whole of the open space in front is thickly dotted with ever-changing groups. Loud are the greetings, hearty the hand-shakings, and cracks on the shoulder that would fell a weakly man are freely exchanged. Here is Dandie Dinmont himself and all his friends from Liddisdale—aye, and men from over the borders, the stout Northumbrians, and statesmen from the hillsides of Cumberland, and the talk is of Cheviot yowes, of tups and lambs and todos, and all the rest; while among the burly crowd such thews and sinews, and broad backs and mighty thighs and brawny arms, that Uncle Jock is quite a baby among them, and your humble servant feels like an attenuated shrimp. Among the crowd of farmers there are dealers from Glasgow feeling their way as to prices, and cannie folk from Leeds. Yes, and even a Frenchman or two gazing in wonder on the scene, men who hail from the banks of Seine from Elbeuf or Rouen.

And yet Angus Ross shakes his head deprecatingly. "Eh, you should have seen the place thirty years ago; a real fine gathering then." But Inverness is all alive and stirring, for in addition to the gathering for the fair there is a grand preaching on the castle hill, while the Highland Society meet at the Town Hall, and Professor Blackie gives an address.

A hasty walk through the town with Jennie and Mary Grant; it is clean, well built, and prosperous-looking, an excellent town to live in no doubt, but not particularly interesting to those who go about on tours. But the castle hill is no doubt a fine site, with a view of the river and the broad forth, and a gleam of the ocean beyond. Over there lies the dreary moor of Culloden, some four miles away, and distant hills bound the scene with the gleam of the setting sun on their misty nightcaps. But it is all fairyland to Jennie; never has she beheld a fairer scene, she thinks, although to others after the charming scenery of the west it appears a little tame and flat. But the secret comes out. Uncle Jock has relented; he has been taking counsel with Angus Ross, and the two together have found out a modus

vivendi for the young people. It is illogical on Jock's part, for if a young fellow jumps into the water and saves you from drowning, it does not follow that he will make a good husband for your niece. Indeed, I should say that in risking his life for another, he displays a want of prudence that does not promise well for the future. But this view of the matter is indignantly repudiated by the young women. "Why, you would have done it yourself," cries Mary Grant, with heightened colour, "if you had been just in the way like Ronald." Well, I hope I should, and anyhow, it is pleasant to have the credit of being capable of such prowess.

It is rather a disappointment, when we muster for dinner, to find that the table is not thronged, as I expected, with the Scotch farmers. But they are nearly all people who dine early, Mary Grant explains, and so we have only tourists to dine with us. But here are the almond-eyed family again, with the dark fallow father and the soft lymphatic mamma; and they, like us, are going to make the passage from sea to sea to-morrow by the Caledonian Canal. I am delighted at the prospect of having those irrepressible and vivacious young people as travelling-companions, but Jennie and Mary don't seem to share my enthusiasm. "And it isn't very kind of you," said Miss Grant lightly, "to be in such high spirits when I am going to leave you all to-morrow." "To leave us!" I cry, quite aghast, putting down knife and fork; "and to-morrow. Oh, you can't be serious." But it is serious, sober earnest. We pass Longashpan to-morrow, and Mary is to stay there for a few weeks. "But it must not be; no—a thousand times no! You cannot be spared, bonnie lassie," I whisper to her under my breath, and she gives me one quick, sweet, wistful, half-reproachful glance that settles my business at once and for ever. But there is no opportunity to say any more, for there is not a quiet corner in the whole house, every corridor streaming with men, and every available room converted for the nonce into a whisky-parlour.

But the grand scene of all is the big salle-à-manger, which has been converted for the occasion into a smoke-room, and here the roar of tongues is at its height, while waiters run about distracted with little cruets of whisky. Great is the fume from a hundred pipes, and the roar from a hundred voices. "But thirty years ago, mon," cries a grizzled old Scot; "aye, and

I mind weel the Laird o' Nippits that was neatly dragged to bed by five waiters and a handful o' lads from the stables, and fighting while every rag was torn from his back." Well, now there is plenty of festivity, but not any hard drinking. One man everybody hails as the doctor—a hearty-looking old fellow in gaiters, with a cast of flies round his hat and a rough fluffy coat, and for him hands are held out like the arms of Briareus in numbers, and then someone cries, "Here comes the duke and a' his following," as a group make their appearance with something of the air of a general and his staff. It is the duke's factor, I expect—the grand vizier of the mighty khan of the Highlands. And so the glasses clink, and the war of voices and laughter goes up with a great incense of tobacco-smoke. "We'll no be in bed the night," says a waiter with an armful of whisky-cruets. And I'd make a night with you, too, my lads, if it were not for the early start on the morrow, and the thought of Mary Grant and the last words that must be said.

A DAY DREAM.

I BASKED in the glorious summer heat,
And dreamt of her, till my fond heart beat,
To the tune of a true love-song.

I glanced from the flowers on which I lay,
And saw where danced as in innocent play,
A ray of the laughing sun.

I held it fast as it glittered by,
And sent it far through the azure sky,
To the home of my only love.

I bade it fly to my darling's heart;
It gilded the leaves with its vanishing dart,
And I was alone with my dream.

Back, back it flashed at its lightning pace,
And gently smiled in my longing face,
And told me of her I love.

It had glistened on locks of golden brown,
And haloed her head with its sunny crown,
And whispered my happy name.

It had gleamed in the light of my darling's eyes,
And spoke to the soul which within them lies,
Of me, and my yearning heart.

And it said how she still was true to our love,
As the stars which shone in the heaven above,
Still true to our love and me.

It had touched her mouth with a gentle kiss,
And brought me back in its message of bliss,
Just one from those lips so sweet.

And this was the tale that it told to me,
Then left me alone to my reverie
Of her, who made its joy.

IN A BALL-ROOM.

A STORY.

THE cloak-room was clearing fast, and the piles of shawls and wraps attested to the fact that the majority of the company had arrived. The —shire Hunt Ball, twenty

years ago, began early. Being the great event of the year to many sober country people, they made a point of arriving at the very beginning and staying to the end. The music had been sounding merrily for some time, when two ladies came in, evidently mother and daughter; the one, middle-aged, calm, and sedate; the other, young, eager, and excited. The latter flung off her cloak, gave a hasty glance at the glass, and stood quivering with impatience, while her mother leisurely divested herself of her wraps and arranged her cap.

"Come along, mother darling," the girl said at last. "Your cap is all right, and you look lovely. We are so late. Poor papa will be quite tired of waiting."

"Poor papa!" said the mother dryly; "he must be in a dreadful fidget yet all the young ladies should be engaged, and there be no partners left for him."

The girl blushed and laughed.

"Never mind, Florrie; if anybody wants to dance with you, they will manage it somehow."

Florrie blushed again, while a smile of the most perfect content broke over her face. It was a fair young face, pretty not with any wonderful beauty, but with freshness, innocence, and sweet temper; a face that weary paterfamilias, yawning in doorways, would comment upon with approbation; that jealous mothers would not pick to pieces, and that daughters would admire without envy.

They found "poor papa" warmly discussing some magisterial difficulty with a country neighbour, and bearing this enforced delay of his entrance to the ball-room with perfect equanimity.

How Florrie's eyes roved round as they entered; how absently she responded to the greetings of various friends! Even the gentleman who solicited the favour of a dance received but half her attention. She was only seventeen, and had not yet learnt the art or the necessity of concealing her feelings. Every emotion wrote itself in clear letters on that childish face. Up and down the room her grey eyes wandered, as she stood by her mother, eagerly scanning the groups of dancers, and then a sudden light came into them, a rush of colour into her cheeks, as a young man detached himself from a knot of red-coated sportsmen and approached her. With what a radiant smile she greeted him! Her mother noted it, and sighed; a sour maiden of forty seeing it, sighed too, and said to herself: "What

a flirt that girl is!" but even while saying it she knew she was unjust. The young man did not sigh. He smiled a smile almost as radiant as Florrie's own—almost, not quite.

"Oh, Miss Darley," he began, "I thought you were never coming."

"I thought we never were," she replied naively; "but we are here now," she added in a tone of extreme satisfaction.

"Yes, you are here now," he said, "and you will stay to the end, and give me a great many dances. Wouldn't you like some tea?" Of course she would like some tea, and as she was going to dance the next waltz with him, it was hardly worth while to return to her mother for the few intervening moments.

Florrie was no flirt, but she was only just out, had seen nothing of the world, and had never stirred from under her mother's wing. What wonder that she was completely captivated by this handsome young soldier, who contrived in so many little ways to imply, though he had not yet said it, that he loved her. She was over head and ears in love with him, never doubted that he was ordained to be her husband, and had the most perfect faith in him.

He was certainly very happy in her society, and would willingly have sat by her side and danced with her the whole night. But Florrie had been well drilled on this point. She looked wistfully at her programme when he handed it back to her half filled with his own name.

"You must scratch them all out but two. I should like it, but I mustn't," she said simply.

A look came over his face that half charmed, half frightened her.

"Ah!" he began eagerly, and then checked himself. "I should like it, but I mustn't," he added half under his breath.

She looked at him wonderingly.

"Did you speak?" she asked.

"No, no; there is the music. Come."

To say that Florrie enjoyed the ball would be to express it feebly. She was simply steeped in content. Whether she danced, or sat unnoticed by her mother's side, she was profoundly happy. Then she had that second dance to look forward to, and she resolutely refused to go to the tea-room till then, that she might honestly want some refreshment after it. Then followed another ten minutes, of which each moment was a lifetime of bliss, never to be forgotten.

As they passed into the ball-room, they met a girl coming out, who had already attracted Mr. Peyton's attention by her extreme beauty—her dazzling complexion, her masses of golden hair, and her big blue eyes. She was leaning on the arm of a miserable-looking little man, who had been heading the train of her admirers the whole evening, and who did not appear, judging from his countenance, to have derived much comfort from the amusement. The young lady stopped Florrie, saying :

"Well, Florrie, are you enjoying yourself? I have tried vainly to catch your eye the whole evening, but you have been so occupied you would not look at me."

There was an undercurrent of sarcasm in the tone which was quite lost on Florrie, who replied enthusiastically :

"I am enjoying myself immensely."

The beauty smiled, and passed on, giving Mr. Peyton a glance from under her long eyelashes that kept him silent till they got back to Mrs. Darley.

"Who is that young lady?" he asked.

"She is a Miss Talbot," Florrie said. "Is she not pretty?"

Over her too had come a vague indefinable sensation of something, she could not tell what, that jarred upon her.

A few minutes after Mr. Peyton had moved away, Alice Talbot came up, and, dismissing her disconsolate partner with a careless nod, she said :

"Dear Mrs. Darley, may I sit by you? Papa is always in the middle of a group of gentlemen, and I never can get near him." Mrs. Darley cordially consented, not without a little wonder, for Miss Talbot was accustomed to go about alone with her father, and did not usually appear to feel the want of a lady chaperon.

"Who was your last partner, Florrie?" Alice enquired.

"Mr. Peyton," said Florrie.

"Mr. Peyton," Alice repeated. "Oh, of course—I know. He is one of the officers of the —th. You must introduce him to me. He has called on us, and it seems foolish not to know him."

A few minutes later the introduction was made. But Mr. Peyton did not seem disposed to spend much time on Alice Talbot. He turned to Florrie eagerly and said :

"Will you let me take you in to supper?"

Then the vague shadow vanished at once from the girl's mind.

"You must just let me have one more dance with Miss Darley," Mr. Peyton said

when Mr. Darley expressed his decided conviction that it was time to go, and the father could not resist his child's happy pleading eyes. Short-sighted old gentleman, he wondered what there was in dancing, that all girls were so fond of it.

When the dance was over and the pair came back, they found Alice Talbot stoutly resisting an attempt on the part of her father to take her away.

"I must stay for the next dance, papa. I am engaged to your good-looking friend," she added in a whisper to Florrie. "I wouldn't miss it for the world."

But Florrie hardly heard her. She was absolutely wild with excitement. Never before had Mr. Peyton been so devoted; never before had she been so sure that he loved her, nor had she realised what it was to be so loved.

"I shall see you on Tuesday at the Grays," he said, as they stood waiting for the carriage, looking down with more tenderness than he perhaps knew into the flushed happy face.

It brightened, if that were possible.

"But I thought you said you were on duty that day?"

"I'll get off somehow. I would risk a court-martial sooner than miss seeing you."

"That would be wrong," she said gravely, with her earnest eyes fixed on his face. "I hope you would not neglect your duty on any consideration. I am sure you would not," she added in a tone of deep conviction.

"I never will after that," he said in a very low voice.

"Do you know that this dance has begun ever so long ago?" she said presently, "and I know that you are engaged to Miss Talbot for it."

"Oh, Miss Talbot is so inundated with partners, that I am sure she won't have waited for me," he replied carelessly. Nevertheless he found that she had waited for him, though there were several gentlemen eager to supply his place.

When he apologised she gave him a brilliant smile, and said she quite understood and forgave him.

Meantime the Darleys drove home. The moon shone down on the father dozing in his corner; on the mother, silent, with many anxious hopes and fears regarding her darling; and on that darling, sitting upright, and wide awake, gazing into the clear frosty sky, and murmuring over and

over again to herself, "I am so happy. I am so happy."

It was six months later, one hot night in June, that Florence Darley followed her mother into another ball-room. Only six months. But a great deal of experience can be gained in that time, and Florrie had acquired rather more than her share.

An indescribable change had come over her whole face and manner. Something of her sweet freshness and happy content were gone. A touch of restlessness, even fretfulness, had taken their place. She was as profoundly indifferent to most of her acquaintances as she had been on a former occasion, but she made an effort to conceal it, and when she looked round the room, it was with hasty furtive glances.

No one rushed eagerly up to her now to express delight at her arrival and to claim half-a-dozen dances. But Florrie had not been in the room a minute, before she knew that Mr. Peyton was there. He was standing by Alice Talbot, who was looking more brilliant and beautiful even than usual, and was bestowing her brightest smiles and all her powers of fascination upon him. With miserable, bitter humility Florrie owned that it was no wonder he had neither eyes nor ears for anyone else. But the acknowledgment did not make it less hard to bear.

"She has so many admirers she might have left him alone," said the poor little thing to herself. But she held herself bravely to outward appearance. A hundred times she checked herself in the act of letting her eyes wander in search of him. She laughed and talked so gaily that one of her partners remarked afterwards that "he never knew Miss Darley had so much fun in her." Once, when he and Alice passed close to her, she was apparently so deeply interested in her conversation that she did not seem to see them. She might have spared herself that small piece of hypocrisy, for by him it passed unnoticed, and only brought a smile of derision to Alice's face. Florrie herself spent the rest of the night in regretting it. For, after all, a smile or a bow from him would have been better than nothing.

Mrs. Darley looked anxiously in the girl's pale face and eyes that had so deep a look of pain in them, though the lips smiled so incessantly.

"I think, my darling," she said at last, "that it is time to go."

"It is quite early," Florrie said wistfully. She could not voluntarily give up the last chance.

But the mother knew how vain it was to wait, and that the sooner they went the better it would be for Florrie's peace.

"I am tired, dear," she said gently, "and it is later than you think."

Then Florrie acquiesced at once. It was over, then, this evening that she had looked forward to with such feverish hope and fear; and what had it brought? Only the establishment of the miserable conviction that she had fought against for weeks past. He was indeed lost to her. Yet, with the inconsistency of human nature, she began at once to consider when and where she might have another opportunity of seeing him. She thought that even an occasional glimpse of his face, a word or a smile, would satisfy her. And she had it.

At the top of the stairs they met him and Alice.

"Going already?" said the latter gaily. "Have you enjoyed yourself, Florrie?"

"Very much," said Florrie promptly, and was about to pass on, for her mother was already at the foot of the stairs, when Mr. Peyton checked her by saying, with a slight expression of uneasiness on his handsome face:

"I was so sorry you were out when I called yesterday. I came to say good-bye. I am off to Southampton to-morrow; thence to India." Even Alice, who never took her sparkling eyes off the girl's sensitive face, could not detect by the quiver of a muscle that this was the first intimation Florrie had had of the fact. She looked with cool composure at the young man as she said quietly:

"I am very sorry we missed you."

"And you will not stay and give me one dance?" he said.

"I am afraid I can't. My mother is tired."

"Well, you must keep one for me at the first ball we meet at on my return from India."

"Oh, certainly, if you are not eaten by a tiger in the meanwhile," she answered, laughing. "Good-bye—bon voyage." And with a nod and a smile she ran lightly down the staircase.

He turned to Alice.

"I won't let myself be eaten by a tiger as long as I know you, my darling, are waiting for me."

"Hush!" she said, glancing round

uneasily. "You must make a fortune, before you can have the right to call me that. My father will never consent otherwise."

"Trust me. Only say you will be true to me."

She raised her lovely eyes to his face for a moment, and he did not notice that she said nothing.

He walked home in the early morning, smoking a cigar, and building castles in the air, of which Alice Talbot was always queen; while Florrie, still in her ball-dress, knelt in her little room at the top of the house beside the open window, looking out over the wide expanse of London chimney-pots, and sobbing:

"I am so miserable—I am so miserable."

It was eighteen years since that memorable hunt-ball, which Florence Darley had marked as a white-letter day in her life, when she once more found herself within the walls of the old court-house for a similar festivity. Florence Darley still, and likely to remain so, both in her own opinion and in that of her friends, though a few of her contemporaries were disposed to consider her contented acceptance of the title of "old maid" as a personal injury to themselves. And truly she was only thirty-six, and might have passed for younger had she chosen to assume the manners and dress of youth. But she had long since lost her parents, and had, moreover, two grown-up nieces, who, motherless, looked up to her as to a mother, so she had no wish to cling to young-ladyhood. She had placed herself in the ranks of the chaperons, and it was in that character she came to-night.

"My dear Florrie, you really make yourself ridiculous with your assumption of old age," said a tall golden-haired woman who entered the room just behind her.

This was the celebrated beauty, Lady Norleigh, once Miss Talbot. She was still lovely, though there were hard lines now round the beautiful mouth, and a restless look of weariness and discontent in the large blue eyes—a curious contrast to Florrie's serene content.

"How do you do, Alice?" said Miss Darley, declining to argue the point. "I thought you were in London. What brings you into these parts?"

"Oh, I came," said Lady Norleigh flippantly, "because Norleigh wanted me not to come."

Norleigh, standing by, laughed feebly, and

tried to look as if it were a joke, in which attempt he failed. He was that miserable-looking little man who had hovered so humbly round Alice in this very room years ago. Several unexpected deaths having considerably altered his worldly position, had also altered Miss Talbot's sentiments towards him. Nevertheless he looked none the happier for his double good fortune. Lady Norleigh passed on in her diamonds, lace, and satin—the cynosure of all eyes—while Florrie, in her sober black gown, placed herself on a bench, prepared to amuse herself by watching her girls amuse themselves, though her attention wandered a good deal to her former rival.

"Auntie," said one of her nieces, suddenly startling her from an intent, half-sad, half-amused observation of Lady Norleigh, "I want to introduce——" the name was lost.

"I think I have had the pleasure of meeting your aunt before, Miss Darley," said a voice which in eighteen years had never faded from Florrie's memory; which even now brought such a rush of mingled pain and pleasure, such suffocating heart-beats, that, for a moment, the sedate old maid was unable to speak. She shook hands with the speaker as if in a dream, was dimly conscious of his sitting down beside her and making trivial remarks about the weather, the decorations of the room, and so on. Gradually she collected herself enough to look at him, and to take in the changes time had made in him. They were not many. He was still handsome, but very much older, both in manners and appearance, more so than even the lapse of years accounted for, but Florrie decided that she would have known him anywhere. He did not stay long beside her, and presently Florrie saw him talking to a very pretty woman, whose youthful appearance, combined with her exceedingly smart attire proclaimed her a bride. Whose bride? As Florrie noted the affectionate admiration with which Colonel Peyton looked upon her, she thought she had no need to ask, and indeed, almost at the same moment, her niece said to her:

"Is she not pretty? Mrs. Peyton, I mean."

"She is very pretty," Florrie said with a smothered sigh. With profound, half-painful interest she watched the fair young wife.

"She looks good," she thought, "as if

and that he sometimes abused the privilege that Nature had given to him. His voice was rather nasal; and this gave rise to a lampoon in verse to the effect that Samson and a duck made a bet who could talk the best, and amidst much applause the duck won the wager. He was gifted with a very strong memory, and though he constantly reminds us of his very great timidity, especially in his early years, he does not say that his memory was ever at fault. He was advised early in life not to attempt to play tragedy, to confine himself to comedy, and to learn by heart all the comic parts in the well known standard plays. His tastes were naturally classical, and in a few years he had made himself master of those parts in the plays of Molière, Regnard, Marivaux, Beaumarchais, and others, which he might be called upon to play at a few hours' notice. There are theatrical critics now in Paris who tell us, rightly or wrongly, that young actors and actresses of the present day do not give themselves so much trouble to learn the old *répertoire* as they used to do half a century ago, and, indeed, that so much labour is not exacted of them. It is certain, however, that Samson studied much and studied well. From his boyhood he had an intelligent sympathy with actors and with their profession; and from the day when he entered the Conservatoire in 1811, to when he retired from the Comédie Française in 1863, there seems to have been no abatement of his devotion either in his own study or in his work which as professor he was bound to give for the benefit of others. He writes in a loyal spirit of good-fellowship, saying what he thinks of his comrades, and he carries the reader with him in his short narration of the various incidents. He talks much about himself, but is very unegotistical. The "I" and the "me" are kept always in the second place, and this is owing as much to literary skill as to a wish on his own part not to appear obtrusive. We are tempted to wish that we had a little more of him; but, perhaps, he has judged rightly that a written account of his own performances might not be acceptable to a large portion of the reading public. The *Mémoires* do not touch upon the last twenty-five years of his public life.

When at the Conservatoire he made friends with two other pupils, Raymond and Perlet. The three young men were often together, and they were all three equally impecunious. After their class

they wished to dine together, but they had no money to pay for their dinner. "However, there were days—rare and hundred times blessed days—when making one sum of our common poverty, we could aspire to a dinner costing twenty-two sous a head. Then we would walk round the Palais Royal to read the signboards outside the restaurants."

At other times they would sup off an omelette and bread and wine at a wine-shop. "These repasts were always seasoned with reflections on theatrical matters, and though our discussions often became warm they did not in any degree interrupt our friendship." They separated late in the evening, making appointments to meet early the next day. On the same page that Samson speaks so touchingly of his old friends, he has also to record their deaths. Perlet and Raymond both died early, not long after their names had become familiar to the theatre-going public. When at the Conservatoire, Samson and Perlet were the two foremost candidates for the first comedy-prize in the year 1812, and it was thought very generally that Perlet would gain the victory. Samson was very unhappy because he had drawn a bad number in the military conscription, and he feared that he would be made to serve in the army. Perlet was free from this danger, and on the day of the examination feigned illness, and did not appear. Samson was, therefore, judged the best of the competitors, and to him was awarded the first prize. Such an act of generosity makes, or ought to make, a turning-point in a man's life; unless we are greatly mistaken, Samson was very little likely to forget the kindness. Perlet afterwards told Samson of his trick; and he was rewarded by winning the same prize himself in the following year. Their common friend Raymond was not their competitor, for he was in the tragedy class, and about the same time he also won a first prize.

Talma was then one of the professors at the Conservatoire, and Raymond was one of his best pupils. Sometimes Talma would give his lesson at his own house, sometimes at the Conservatoire; and then all the pupils would be present. He was not so regular in his lessons as might perhaps seem desirable, for at times he was absent-minded and would forget his lesson. At other times he would make it unusually short; again he would prolong it very considerably. When this happened

no one found fault with him, for he was liked and respected by all his pupils. He came to the Conservatoire one day dressed with a good deal of care, and while instructing Raymond how to fall down from horror at the crime he is supposed to have committed, he said: "I can't fall down, because I should dirty myself, but you will understand it without that;" and he let himself tumble on to the mattress laid on the floor. This he repeated three times, taking care, after each tumble, to brush the dust off his coat, and always saying: "I can't fall down, because I should dirty myself." This was, of course, only a little good-humoured affectation of the master, put on with the intention of showing the pupil the necessity of knowing how to tumble easily, and without the appearance of studied effect. If Talma had a high opinion of the actor's art, he recognised also very fully the imperative necessity for continuous study, not only in the learning of a part, but in its methodical and well-regulated performance. Our author, speaking of himself about this period, says: "Talma said very kind things to me, but he reproached me for not speaking oftener in a modulated tone of voice."

This was a lesson which Talma, when a young man, had learned from Molé, an actor of a generation earlier, and later on in his volume Samson relates how Talma had described Molé's lesson, and the beneficial effect of speaking in a modulated tone was that the ear of the public, when not suddenly taken by storm, was more impressionable, and could therefore be worked upon for a longer time.

Let us hear, too, what Talma said of one Joanny, who had gained a reputation as a fine actor of tragedy at the Odéon Theatre about the year 1820. Népomucène Lemerrier—a playwright of those days, whose name is now almost forgotten—had been praising Joanny very highly, comparing him to Lekain, a famous and very well known actor of the last century, until Talma could stand it no longer. He blurted out in his heat: "What do you mean, Lemerrier, by saying such things? You dare to compare a great actor like Lekain to a jumping-jack like Joanny! Work conscientiously for twenty or thirty years; endeavour to be dignified without pomposity, easy without carelessness, impassioned without extravagance; be the first tragedian in your country, and then, when you are dead, let somebody compare you to a man without taste, without truth,

without moderation, who plays at hazard, without knowledge of what he is doing, and who is more often than not a mere caricature!" At another time, Talma was walking to the Odéon Theatre, where Joanny was going to play, and in the street he said to his companion: "I am going to see the man who is called the Talma of the provinces. He has undoubtedly tragic qualities, but he does not know his business; he does not know himself. When he acts well it is without knowing it. The moment his flashes have left him he is profound darkness. He is neither master of his gesture nor of his voice, and he is altogether deficient in taste and in measure."

Samson himself says the same thing: "This opinion is just in its severity." And immediately afterwards he tells us how Joanny once played Orestes in Racine's *Andromaque* very well, because he had a sore throat and was obliged to contain himself, but that afterwards, when the soreness in his throat had disappeared, his acting was detestable.

These judgments, deliberately given by great masters, cannot be too well borne in mind either by actors themselves or by others who are fond of the theatre as an intelligent and rational amusement. In point of fact, the actor must so learn his part as to be able to repeat it with almost as much regular clockwork accuracy as the pianoforte-player or the violin-player can repeat his notes in half-a-dozen different concert-rooms. Nothing should be left to chance. The inspiration of the moment may produce one very fine shriek that is really grand in its sound, but the calmer tones that come afterwards, if they are to excite our horror or move us to pity or to indignation, must have been repeated and practised by the actor until he is sure of his voice and sure also of being able to give out the sounds he wishes to produce. It is the same in comedy as in tragedy. The actor who can endure and profit by this constant repetition may or may not make a good actor; but he who shrinks instinctively from the wearisomeness of so much mechanical labour, will give to his audience more disappointment than pleasure, let his talents be otherwise as great even as he might wish.

On the 15th November, 1815, Samson married. His wife was at the time a pupil of Fleury, one of the professors at the Conservatoire. She was eighteen years old, and he was twenty-two. Neither had any

money, and they joined a company who were acting in the provinces. Samson gained a good reputation at Rouen; he stayed there three years, and he was much liked by the public. He played at the Théâtre du Vieux Marché—probably the same house that is now standing—and he tells us that Mdlle. Mars gave a few performances there, and that he had the honour of playing with her. One piece was Molière's *Tartuffe*. Mdlle. Mars played the part of Elmire, and Samson, *Tartuffe*, the hypocrite. Then, as always, he was dreadfully timid. The audience greeted him as he went on the stage, but he was still very nervous. The well-trained actress whispered to him: "Now then, pluck up; don't be afraid;" and he triumphantly performed the rest of his part.

We must pass over rapidly those events in Samson's life which, though they were doubtless at the time all-important to him, can now be to us only as so many steps in the ladder which he mounted during the work of his life.

A few words can be said in passing as to some matters of general interest. After leaving Rouen Samson was engaged at the Odéon Theatre in Paris, and played there from 1819 until 1826. On April 1st of that year he entered the Comédie Française in the Rue de Richelieu. Propositions had been made to him the year previously, but he felt bound to decline them, as the total sum of his appointments would fall very much below the ten thousand francs he earned at the Odéon.

Of his first appearance he says: "I made my début at the Comédie Française without brilliancy. I never liked a first appearance; I was too cowardly, and I have always wanted a considerably long time to familiarise myself with the public." And earlier in his *Mémoires*, Samson says of himself: "I have nearly always failed in my débuts; I do not understand how I can have obtained any success in new pieces. Whenever I had to play a part that was altogether new, I was the most miserable of men; and a week before the first performance a sort of ill-humour would come over me. I began then to feel the tortures of fear."

In 1828 Samson was appointed supernumerary professor of declamation at the Conservatoire. The letter which told him officially of his nomination ended with these words: "I announce to you with pleasure that your functions are gratuitous." He says that this news did not give him all the

pleasure that it gave the writer of the letter; but he nevertheless set about his new business immediately. Among the earliest of his pupils was a little girl, then scarcely nine years old, *la petite Sylvanie*, as she was called, who had enchanted the elder pupils, and who had fascinated the examiners. Of this child who was afterwards so well-known as Madame Arnould Plessy, Samson says: "Her utterance, which was not then formed, could not be what it afterwards became, that is to say, one of the finest womanly voices that was ever heard upon the stage, having both strength and sweetness, and pronouncing every sound with very great suppleness." Anyone who has heard Madame Plessy on the stage, especially in a play written in verse, must have been struck with her wonderful elocution; every word, whether she spoke quickly or slowly, was clearly and distinctly articulated. When she was nine years old she repeated part of a scene from Roane's *Iphigénie* with charming grace, and was much disappointed when Samson felt himself bound to tell her that she was too young for such things, and that she had better learn by heart *La Fontaine's* fables. The ex-professor naïvely adds: "It was not upon that day that I won her sympathies." Her triumph came quite soon enough. Five years later, Samson, taking advantage of the goodwill that Mdlle. Mars had always shown to him, asked her to allow him to present to her his young protégée. Leave was given, and the introduction was made. The girl of fourteen was brought to the woman of fifty-five, who received her with every mark of graciousness.

A few lines lower down we read: "But on the stage self-love is the feeling most predominant. . . . If Mdlle. Mars ever had in her a germ of kindly affection for the young beginner, the first performance of Scribe's play (*Une Passion Secrète*) stifled it altogether." Then there is a short description of the attitudes of the two actresses before the first rise of the curtain. One distrustful of herself toward the end of her long and victorious career, the other fresh, buoyant, and ignoring all cause for fear. As soon as Plessy saw Mars she ran to meet her, and put up her forehead to be kissed. Mars kissed her, and asked her if she was not afraid. "Afraid! No, madame; why should I be afraid?" The elder lady smiled and said: "That will come later." The other did not understand, but seemed to say: "Why should

it come later?" After the curtain went down for the last time, there were cries in the theatre, "Mars!" "Plessy!" The former came from the parterre, where they were aided by the claque; the latter from the stalls and from the first balcony-seats. The girl, enjoying the excitement, said to her master, who had been playing a subordinate part in the piece: "They are calling me, M. Samson; don't you hear?" Samson, who was as much afraid of his young pupil as he had been proud at her success, tried to calm her, and sent for Mdlle. Mars. Mars came down with evident signs of ill-humour, and after she had made her bow to the public again retreated without speaking a word. Unfortunately she allowed herself to be guided by passion, for the next day she went to the director of the theatre, and told him that he had made use of Mdlle. Plessy as a means of driving her out from the Comédie Française.

Another of Samson's pupils was Rachel, the great tragic actress. In representing strong passion Rachel was almost unsurpassable, but she was less good in milder parts. In 1836 or 1837, ten or eleven years after Talma's death, she was acting in a fourth-rate theatre leading out of the Rue St. Martin. Some of Samson's pupils saw her there, and reported their discovery to their master. He went to see her, and found her playing the part of a queen in one of the worst of Corneille's tragedies. Her stature was small, but the men who were playing with her seemed to lose something of their own natural height. She did not understand her part, but Samson's practised ear told him that in her voice there was a tragic accent. At the end of the piece he went behind the scenes to congratulate her, and found her playing at some game with her comrades which required her to hop about on one leg. Samson made his compliment, which she listened to with one leg still in the air; she thanked him graciously, and went on with her game. In February, 1838, Samson was the means of engaging her at the Théâtre Français, in Paris, where she was to have four thousand francs a year. She made her first début as Camille in Corneille's *Horace*. Her second début was as Emilie in Corneille's *Cinna*. Her third début was as *Hermoine* in Racine's *Andromaque*, and those who have never seen Rachel's acting might almost wish that they had lived forty years ago to have seen her in this part. *Hermoine's* subtle character is very

difficult to represent. The actress must be passionate, and yet appear tender and loving in her passion. If she has not these qualities she had better not attempt to play *Hermoine*. Let those who think Racine cold study this character; a second reading of the play will perhaps make them change their mind.

Samson does not bring his *Mémoires* down beyond the year 1840; he stops after Rachel had made her first appearances at the Théâtre Français. His appointment of professor at the Conservatoire in 1828 was only as a supernumerary; in 1836 he was in actual possession of the office. His class became celebrated, no doubt partly because of his two famous pupils of whom mention has just been made. Among his best parts as an actor were *Bertrand de Rantzeau* in Scribe's play, *Bertrand et Raton*; *le Maréchal de Destigney* in *Lady Tartuffe*; *le Marquis* in Mdlle. de la Seiglière. Besides his *Art Théâtral*, already mentioned, Samson wrote some comedies, all of which had more or less success: *La Fête de Molière*; *La Belle Mère et le Gendre*; *La Famille Poisson*, and others. The last time he appeared on the stage was on the 31st March, 1863. He was much applauded all the evening, and as he came out of the theatre he was welcomed by a large and enthusiastic crowd of admirers. On the following day his resignation was formally accepted. He was then seventy years old, and had been before the public of the best theatre in France for more than thirty years. He died on the 31st of March, 1871.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I. THE GREY DAWN.

THE present century was in its thirties.

Life in those days seems like a far-off time, but more from the vast expanse of human progress that lies between then and now than from actual lapse of years.

Electricity—that marvellous agency by which in these days knowledge flashes from one portion of the globe to another, more swiftly than light itself—had but just awakened at the touch of science, and was hovering upon the threshold of a career of activity at once beautiful and terrible.

Since the knowledge of passing events could not "run to and fro in the earth"

as now, people were content to dwell longer and more closely upon this or that marvel; nor did wonders of all kinds and incidents of every colour jostle each other, a motley crowd, to gain the public ear, like the crush at a ticket-seller's window where each is ardent to be first, and none willing to be last.

The century was in its thirties—well on in them.

The year was in its wane; but only as a fruit that is over-ripe may be said to be so; failing rather from excess of maturity than from any sign of decay. Not only was the year in its wane, but the night, too—the early autumn night, whose crown of stars began to shine a little faintly.

The hour had come which is rather the death of the night than the birth of the day; which partakes of both life and death, and is wholly neither.

Though the town of Becklington and its surrounding country still lay lapped in silence, one voice there was that sang unceasingly, yet sang so soft and sweet and low that it rather added to the slumberous nature of things than otherwise, as might a mother's lullaby over a sleeping child. This was the fall and murmur of a river that took its rise in the far-off hills, and found its outlet to the sea through a network of deep watercourses, taking here and there a twist or turn so quaint and unexpected that you were ready to fancy the foolish stream must have repented leaving the quiet upland haunts that had seen its birth, and was trying to make its way back again, scared by the rush and noise of the sea which lay some way ahead, and the busy life of the town.

One of these tributary branches was broader than the rest, and standing at equal distances along its banks, sentinel-wise, were pollards, each with its shadow sleeping at its feet; stirring with the faint ripple of a tide just on the turn, and with the stirring of their actual selves in the breath of a faint chill breeze that came up from the coast, gently buffeting the drowsy heads of the flowers, as a hint that it would soon be time to be up and ready to greet the day.

The face of the water everywhere began to give back the faint grey light. The streets and buildings of the town showed grey with closely-curtained windows. Never a figure was yet astir, though from the stables here and there came a sound that told of horses shaking their head-stalls, and moving lazily among their straw as

conscious that the day's work was not far off.

Becklington was an irregularly built but picturesque town with a central gathering of streets and squares clustered about an ancient market-place, and arms of newer buildings stretching down towards the sea that showed as a blue line beyond the many mouths of the river. In the midst of what was called the Meadows, a broad expanse of grass-land dotted with clumps of trees, stood the old square-towered church. In the midst of the market-place was the Market Cross, moss-grown and venerable, round which on market-day innumerable bargains were made with much chatter, and frequent disputations of a complicated nature.

This cross was said to have been brought to Becklington during the time of the Plague, and was looked upon in the light of a talisman, garlands of leaves being hung upon it during hay-carrying to ensure a continuance of fine weather.

Market-day at Becklington was a very busy and exciting time, few such occasions passing without some frightened stirk or obstinate pig becoming unmanageable, and having a mind to investigate the contents of one or other of the shops which abutted on the mart. Besides these casual chances of interesting events, the whole place was gay with stalls and booths, while they in their turn were bright with store of posies from the country, bunches of all old-fashioned flowers, lupins and columbine, London pride and golden marigolds, backed by sweetbriar and thyme, and tied together with green wythes. There too might be seen pyramids of snow-white new-laid eggs, and butter yellow as the buttercups and cowslips that helped to make the milk whence it was churned.

At distances outside the town were sprinkled homesteads, and more pretentious dwellings still, one pre-eminent among the rest for the beauty of its situation and a long avenue of yews, well-nigh black with age, that led to its portal.

This was Dale End, the seat of Sir Roland Ashby, the "great man" of the neighbourhood, but one whose greatness had not hitherto availed to save him from certain domestic trials and embarrassments, in the details of which his humbler neighbours took a sympathetic interest, not untainted by a subtle undercurrent of satisfaction. Wealth and rank, though they may elevate a man above his fellows, do not always lift him out of the reach of sorrow,

as the Ashbys of Dale End had of late found to their bitter cost; and, in consequence of this being so, many heads of many wiseacres were sagely shaken in Becklington, while moral sentiments of the most edifying description were quoted without stint on all sides.

Along the side of Becklington market-place ran the town-hall, a building of which the townsfolk were not a little proud—a pride that few unprejudiced beholders felt themselves in a condition to regard in the light of a thing that stood upon just and sure foundation, for an uglier piece of architecture never emanated from the architectural brain. Facing this was the Town and County Bank, an edifice that had apparently taken the bit between its teeth, bolted into a corner, jammed its head against the wall of the lower end of the market-place, and taken up such a position that the rest of it jutted out into space as a rocky promontory into a bay, so that it fronted two ways—indeed was a double-faced sort of a place altogether, cleverly keeping an eye on the passers-by in two thoroughfares at once.

Its entrance-door was at the end of a dark and narrow passage in an odd and out-of-the-way corner, shrinking from the general eye of the public as if, in the interests of financial matters, it had some reason for being hidden and secret in its ways. In truth, strangers visiting the Town and County Bank, doubtless to deposit therein vast sums of money, had been known to wander round and round under the impression that there was a proper and dignified front door somewhere if they could only find it, and to consider themselves injured, and to look upon their personal dignity as wounded, because, there being no other way in, they were constrained at last to be content with the meanness of the dark and narrow entry and the shabby door. Perhaps they tried to persuade themselves that it was all part and parcel of a crafty design for the safety of the—presumably—immense treasure contained in the bank, and out of this frame of mind grew a comfortable satisfaction as to the safety of their own particular fraction of that treasure for all time to come, and an inclination to look upon the sneaking door as they might have looked upon the slit in a huge money-box, through which it was the easiest thing in the world to put money in, and an almost impossible feat to get money out.

The chimneys of this building were

wide and low, and bore no sort of family resemblance to each other. One of the lowest and widest of all was clasped, and wreathed, and made a regular jack-in-the-green of by an ivy plant which, having its origin in some hidden cranny or cul de sac, suddenly appeared in the form of sundry bare serpent-like stems crawling up the wall and over the slates, to burst into wonderful vigour and display a marvellous wealth of green leaves and black berries, causing, no doubt, the various sparrows who chirped and fluttered about it, to imagine they lived in the country and had a vast advantage over their fellows who frequented the adjacent streets and houses.

And now, just as the pollards on the river-bank were becoming conscious of their own shadows; just as the flowers were bending in the fields, and every bough was swaying ever so gently in the earliest breeze of dawn; just as an odd rook or two uttered a sleepy caw, standing on the edge of his nest and ruffling the feathers of his long-folded wings; a blue filmy smoke that had been rising from this ivy-bound chimney, veiling the stars when they shone their brightest, began to wane as they waned, grew more vapour-like, grew indistinct, grew fainter still, was seen no more.

Surely some busy toiler burnt the midnight-oil, some active brain kept vigil, while all the world around was sleeping, in Becklington Bank, and now, as grey lines began to cross the eastern sky, as the river and, far beyond, the sea stirred and trembled beneath the first touch of dawn, that toiler sought a welcome and well-earned repose. If this were so, then Nature soon reversed this order of things, waking to renewed activity after her night's sleep.

With the passing of each moment the shadows of the pollards grew more distinct, always trembling with the stirring of the tide, but more and more clearly defined in the growing light—the light that from silvery grey began to turn to gold.

For the sun was rising, and his gladsome greeting was given back to him in gladness by the world on which he set himself to shine with such goodwill.

A little later still, and the red-tiled roofs of the homesteads glowed with a burnished brightness at once ruddy and golden, and could anyone have turned himself into a bird, and taken a bird's-eye view of Becklington and its surroundings, he would have seen the river running

molten gold, and all its many outlets, mouths of fire; while the tip of every bough on every tree would have borne golden leaves. Even the wings of the swallows, as they flew circling hither and thither in a sea of blue, caught the reflection and were flecked with gold for the nonce, while as to the vane on Becklington town-hall, it was a dazzling sight and must have made the swallows blink again as they neared it.

It was in truth a beauteous morning which now broke upon the rather lazy town, and Little Jake, the cobbler, thought as much to himself as he came to his shop door and surveyed Nature as represented by Becklington market-place and what could be seen of the roofs of adjacent houses from that standpoint, with the dignity becoming a man who stood upon his own threshold, and had a boy under him to take the shutters down while he looked on.

The weazened old cobbler had so long been spoken of and to as Little Jake, that it appeared likely that both he and his neighbours had forgotten any other and more definite appellation which might have belonged to him in the remote ages, but assuredly had not stuck to him. He would doubtless have had to hesitate a moment if asked suddenly to take oath as to whether Jake was his family or baptismal name, or neither.

Jake was the greatest gossip in the market-place. Nor did he hide this qualification under a bushel, rather did he set it on a hill, and chuckled as he laid claim to knowing "more nor twenty men—aye, nor women-folk either—and that's a bold thing to say, neighbours, for one as knows their ways—of what goes on i' Becklington, and mony a mile o' country round about it too."

All day long Jake sat on a low broad-backed bench facing his shop-window (of which the ledge was so low as to be on a level with his knees, and which was merely an unglazed square opening with a double shutter), with his tools beside him, and somebody's boot or somebody's shoe upon his knee.

Jake had a way of tucking his legs (such spindle-shanks as they were, mere apologies for the ordinary lower limbs of man) under this bench, as if conscious of their deficiencies, still further shrouding them from public view by a vast leathern apron coloured bronze and black with long service.

In and out, in and out, flew his busy awl; on and on wagged his busy tongue,

while he made or mended, patched or heeled. Every passer-by lingered to have a word with Jake, for all the town had grown to look upon him as a sort of newspaper in human form edited by himself, and sure to be in possession of the last bit of news, the latest tit-bit of town or county scandal. For there was scandal in those days that seem so far away (only seem, for in reality they are but a span off), though it was not diffused so rapidly as now, and had perhaps a greater chance of holding some shadow of truth in it, since it was not passed from hand to hand so quickly, nor flung so far.

Workmen going home to dinner; tradesmen on their way to or from the making of wonderful bargains; farmers' men driving big top-heavy carts of hay that were pulled up with many a sonorous "Whoa!" and "Stand by, there!" opposite the cobbler's stall, and there made of themselves fragrant sweet-scented obstructions in the king's highway; these and many others stayed to have a word with Jake.

Nor were loiterers of a better condition lacking, such as the Rev. Cuthbert Deane, own cousin to Sir Roland Ashby, a divine much beloved and trusted both by rich and poor, and Dr. Turtle, genteelst of physicians; while even that young buck, Sir Rowland's son and heir—of whom none in Becklington or out of it had a good word to say—had been known to bid Jake the time of day and prate of his own ill-doings, as to which he was never shy or shame-faced, but rather boasted of parading them before the world.

Jake's spectacles had a trick of resting half-way down his nose, so that he could the more conveniently watch the progress of his work; but the boy before alluded to—one Abel Dibbs by name—did solemnly declare that when "Maister Jake" looked over his spectacles he saw just as well as, if not better than, when he looked through them.

Now he held them in his hand as he surveyed the morning—always with an eye to the boy, though—and as he held them they caught in their turn the gleam of the golden sunlight, twinkling as though they were living eyes and not mere glass for other eyes to look through.

In time to come, when Jake told the story of that day's fair dawn, he was apt to assert that he—the boy of course went for nothing—was the first living thing abroad in the old market-place.

"And, deary me, how peaceful it all

did look!" he would say, with his head on one side, and those spindles, his legs, wavering as he talked. "How quiet and serene! As lovely a day as ever I set eyes on, with the sun a shinin' and the birds a singin' and Amos Callender opposite a shavin' himself at an upper window as simple and unsuspectin' as the child unborn. I can't well call to mind a finer mornin' nor that mornin', and there I stood, at peace with all the world, as one may say"—again the boy counted for nothing, for Jake was never at peace with the boy—"but still a voice within me seemed to say: 'Jake, my good man, there's a storm a brewin' as shall shake that there market-place, and you along wi' it, to the very centre of its bein'."

By this it will be seen that the cobbler was what may be called a "knowledgeable man"—one who took in a weekly newspaper and read it aloud to a select circle on a Saturday night at The Safe Retreat, interspersing the letter-press with comments of his own that were looked upon by his hearers as a costly mental embroidery more valuable by far than the stuff which formed their groundwork—ergo, his impressions of the peacefulness of the golden morning in question were things not to be slighted, nor yet without a certain significance of their own.

As there are spots upon the sun, so were there flaws in Jake's knowledgeableness, for this mental embroidery of his had at times a tendency to become too elaborate; in other words, his fancy bolted with him as though it had been a fiery and unmanageable steed, and carried him, as his friend and neighbour Joshua Callender feelingly remarked, "the Lord knows where."

Jake dreamed dreams and saw visions, and then tried to palm them off upon the world as facts—or may be, in his infinite belief in himself, himself mistook them for realities, as on the present occasion, when there is not the slightest reason to suppose that he was conscious of any evil presentiment at all, as he stood in the sunlight on his own doorstep and ruminated how much he should charge Dr. Turtle for the "job" of putting a patch on his left-foot riding-boot and levelling the heel of its fellow.

In the matter of claiming to be the first man astir in the market-place on that eventful morning of the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and thirty-seven, it is probable that Jake had better justification.

True that in the farms that were scat-

tered round Becklington warm milk from full udders had spurted into the milking-cans, making a merry music of its own, an hour ago; yard-dogs had come out of their kennels with mighty yawns and stretchings of cramped limbs, and had set to work to bark at nothing, and to warn nobody off the premises, that being the way in which every well-bred watch-dog naturally begins the day; cocks had defied one another, answering from farm to farm like rival clarions from rival castles; the ducks had set their flat bills to gabble in the gutters, and the swirl of the churns might have been heard in the sweet cool dairies.

But Town, that modish lady, is never such an early riser as the fairer, simpler wench, her sister, Country, so all this counts for nothing as set against Jake's boastful statement.

There was the lamplighter of course, he who felt a certain pride in his occupation of an evening when, going on his rounds, he found himself not without some following of admiring urchins, ardent to watch him set his flecks of light at distances, like flowers in a garden, but was apt to regard the street-lamps as his bitterest enemies when they had to be put out at an hour when happier mortals were still burrowing in sleepy pillows. He didn't count for much. There was no merit in his early rising. What is obligatory can never be meritorious; and had that lamplighter failed in his matutinal duties, would not the town council and corporation have dismissed him with ignominy, taken his little ladder from him, and never let him run up and down it any more?

Oh yes, he knew on which side his bread was buttered, and though he might like his evening duties best because there was more glory to be got out of them, and they showed him up in the light of a kind of public benefactor, there was no fear he would shirk the morning work, as long as the post was well paid, and the gentry tipped the holder of it at Christmas-time. So the lamplighter also went to the wall, looked upon as a point to be made against Jake's claims.

The fact was Jake's boy was a proverb for a lie-abed, and his master had to play the part of clarion. Else would Abel be found "snoring his head off" at an hour when the shutter should be down, the shop tidied up, and pine sticks crackling in the back-room grate. Truly, if snoring could have taken Abel's head off, that interesting youth would have been decapitated long since, for a style of breathing

that would have meant apoplexy in anybody else, only meant healthy slumber in Abel; he being, as his mother owned with tears on the occasion of his apprenticeship to the shoemaking trade, a "heavy feeder," and, in consequence, "a bit hard to drive."

Therefore did Jake survey the awakening world, always keeping an eye upon the boy.

Before long all the sounds and sights of daily life made themselves perceptible. Here and there a blind was raised, like a lazy eye opening, and the worthy man, Callender, no longer enjoyed the monopoly of the upper windows, while passers-by became frequent in the market-place.

Right merrily shone the sun as he rose higher and higher in the heavens, winking and blinking in Jake's spectacles, and setting Dr. Turtle's silver snuff-box on fire, as that talented and elegant physician came tripping across the market-place, stepping as delicately as though the round stones with which it was paved were eggs, and he was afraid of breaking them.

Discreetly and professionally attired in black stockings, knee-breeches, long-skirted coat, and many-folded kerchief, fastened with a dainty pin about his neck, the Becklington Æsculapius was a pleasant sight to see. As a result of an inveterate habit of snuffing, he was apt to be a little powdery, but was none the worse for that in the eyes of his admirers. His was the most loyal of souls, the "ocean to the river of his thoughts" being the coronation of a girl-queen in the month of roses. So absorbing was his delight in this fair and patriotic subject that it was never long absent from his discourse, and he had some ado to keep it out of his prescriptions.

Dr. Turtle wore a wig. He said, from a love for a bygone fashion; the evil-minded vowed from a cause more urgent, and asserted that so sensitive was he as to the baldness of his pate, that, when ill, he lay abed in his wig, and had left directions in his will that he was to be buried in it.

It was a rather full and very becoming wig, dark-brown, and curly at the ends, and from out this penthouse looked his handsome eyes, dark and twinkling, ever ready to see the droll side of everything, and finding a suitably grave expression difficult to attain to on certain sorrowful professional occasions. His smile was buoyant, the teeth it displayed excellent, his age a mystery, his skill undeniable.

"Out early, doctor," said Jake, touching his scrubby tow-coloured locks respectfully, and shaking a furtive fist at the boy, who stood to gaze at the new comer.

"Yes—a patient to see betimes. No bad thing either, Jake, to have to be out on such a morning. Queen's weather—queen's weather! Just such a day, you may be sure, as shone upon that sweet young creature—Eh day! they're slug-abeds over yonder," cried the doctor, breaking the thread of his sentence off sharp, and almost pirouetting on the stones in the velocity with which he turned himself about. "What's this?—what's this?"

Jake rubbed his eyes and rumbled his sparse locks. The boy, for once unrebuked, stared in the same direction as the other two, opening his mouth at the same time as his eyes, the better to take in the unwonted aspect of affairs.

"Lord bless my soul!" ejaculated the doctor, hastily pocketing his snuff-box, and setting his glasses gingerly astride his nose. "Are they all murdered in their beds over there?"

Assuredly the employes of the Becklington Town and County Bank had overslept themselves, for, though every puddle left in the market-place by the rain of the day before laughed and dimpled in the sunshine—though the garish light beat upon barred windows as if to try and shame them for shutting out anything so bright and beautiful, there was no sign of life or stir about the place.

The doctor stared; Jake stared; the boy stared hardest of all. Presently others came to help them. Little groups of two or three gathered at the corners of the streets, and every eye was fixed upon the bank, which stared back blankly, as a blind man might.

And as the hour wore on the sounds of life became the sounds of strife, stir became tumult, wonderment grew to mingled rage and fear.

Something strange, sinister, untoward, had come about in the good town of Becklington.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXVIII. MR. HARKAWAY.

WHEN the first Monday in November came Harry was still living at the rectory. Indeed, what other home had he in which to live? Other friends had become shy of him besides his uncle. He had been accustomed to receive many invitations. Young men, who are the heirs to properties, and are supposed to be rich because they are idle, do get themselves asked about, here and there,—and think a great deal of themselves in consequence. "There's young Jones. He is fairly good-looking, but hasn't a word to say for himself. He will do to pair off with Miss Smith, who'll talk for a dozen. He can't hit a haystack, but he's none the worse for that. We haven't got too many pheasants. He'll be sure to come when you ask him,—and he'll be sure to go." So Jones is asked, and considers himself to be the most popular man in London. I will not say that Harry's invitations had been of exactly that description; but he too had considered himself to be popular, and now greatly felt the withdrawal of such marks of friendship. He had received one "put off"—from the Ingoldsbys of Kent. Early in June, he had promised to be there in November. The youngest Miss Ingoldsby was very pretty, and he, no doubt, had been gracious. She knew that he had meant nothing,—could have meant nothing. But he might come to mean something, and had been most pressing asked. In September there came a letter to him to say that the room intended for him at Ingoldsby had been burnt down. Mrs. Ingoldsby was so extremely sorry,—and so were the "girls!" Harry could trace it all up. The Ingoldsbys knew

the Greens, and Mrs. Green was sister to Septimus Jones, who was absolutely the slave,—the slave as Harry said, repeating the word to himself, with emphasis,—of Augustus Scarborough. He was very unhappy, not that he cared in the least for any Miss Ingoldsby, but that he began to be conscious that he was to be dropped.

He was to be taken up, on the other hand, by Joshua Thoroughbung. Alas, alas, though he smiled and resolved to accept his brother-in-law with a good heart, this did not in the least salve the wound. His own county was to him less than other counties, and his own neighbourhood less than other neighbourhoods. Buntingford was full of Thoroughbungs, the best people in the world, but not quite up to what he believed to be his mark. Mr. Prosper himself was the stupidest ass! At Welwyn, people smelt of the City. At Stevenage, the parsons' set began. Baldock was a "caput mortuum" of dulness. Royston was alive only on market days. Of his own father's house, and even of his mother and sisters he entertained ideas that savoured a little of depreciation. But, to redeem him from this fault,—a fault which would have led to the absolute ruin of his character had it not been redeemed and at last cured,—there was a consciousness of his own vanity and weakness. "My father is worth a dozen of them, and my mother and sisters two dozen," he would say of the Ingoldsbys when he went to bed in the room which was to be burned down in preparation for his exile. And he believed it. They were honest; they were unselfish; they were unpretending. His sister Molly was not above owning that her young brewer was all the world to her; a fine honest bouncing girl, who said her prayers with a meaning, thanked the Lord for giving her Joshua, and

laughed so loud that you could hear her out of the rectory garden half across the park. Harry knew that they were good, did in his heart know that where the parsons begin the good things were likely to begin also.

He was in this state of mind, the hand of good pulling one way and the devil's pride the other, when young Thorough-bung called for him one morning to carry him on to Cumberlow Green. Cumberlow Green was a popular meet in that county, where meets have not much to make them popular,—except the good humour of those who form the hunt. It is not a county either pleasant or easy to ride over, and a Puckeridge fox is surely the most ill-mannered of foxes. But the Puckeridge men are gracious to strangers, and fairly so among themselves. It is more than can be said of Leicestershire, where sportsmen ride in brilliant boots and breeches, but with their noses turned supernaturally into the air. "Come along; we've four miles to do, and twenty minutes to do it in. Holloa, Molly, how d'ye do? Come up on to the step and give us a kiss."

"Go away," said Molly, rushing back into the house. "Did you ever hear anything like his impudence?"

"Why shouldn't you?" said Kata. "All the world knows it." Then the gig, with the two sportsmen, was driven on. "Don't you think he looks handsome in his pink coat?" whispered Molly afterwards to her elder sister. "Only think; I have never seen him in a red coat since he was my own. Last April, when the hunting was over, he hadn't spoken out; and this is the first day he has worn pink this year."

Harry, when he reached the meet, looked about him to watch how he was received. There are not many more painful things in life than when an honest gallant young fellow has to look about him in such a frame of mind. It might have been worse had he deserved to be dropped, some one will say. Not at all. A different condition of mind exists then, and a struggle is made to overcome the judgment of men which is not in itself painful. It is part of the natural battle of life, which does not hurt one at all,—unless, indeed, the man hate himself for that which has brought upon him the hatred of others. Repentance is always an agony,—and should be so. Without the agony there can be no repentance. But even then it is hardly so sharp as that feeling of injustice which accompanies the unmeaning look, and dumb faces, and pre-

tended indifference of those who have condemned.

When Harry descended from the gig he found himself close to old Mr. Harkaway, the master of the hounds. Mr. Harkaway was a gentleman who had been master of these hounds for more than forty years, and had given as much satisfaction as the county could produce. His hounds, which were his hobby, were perfect. His horses were good enough for the Hertfordshire lanes and Hertfordshire hedges. His object was not so much to run a fox as to kill him in obedience to certain rules of the game. Ever so many hindrances have been created to bar the killing a fox,—as for instance that you shouldn't knock him on the head with a brickbat,—all of which had to Mr. Harkaway the force of a religion. The laws of hunting are so many, that most men who hunt cannot know them all. But no law had ever been written, or had become a law by the strength of tradition, which he did not know. To break them was to him treason. When a young man broke them he pitied the young man's ignorance, and endeavoured to instruct him after some rough fashion. When an old man broke them, he regarded him as a fool who should stay at home, or as a traitor, who should be dealt with as such. And with such men he could deal very hardly. Forty years of reigning had taught him to believe himself to be omnipotent, and he was so in his own hunt. He was a man who had never much affected social habits. The company of one or two brother sportsmen to drink a glass of port wine with him and then to go early to bed, was the most of it. He had a small library, but not a book ever came off the shelf unless it referred to farriers or the "*Res venatica*." He was unmarried. The time which other men gave to their wives and families he bestowed upon his hounds. To his stables he never went, looking on a horse as a necessary adjunct to hunting, expensive, disagreeable, and prone to get you into danger. When any one flattered him about his horse he would only grunt, and turn his head on one side. No one in these latter years had seen him jump any fence. But yet he was always with his hounds, and when any one said a kind word as to their doings, that he would take as a compliment. It was they who were there to do the work of the day, which horses and men could only look at. He was a sincere, honest, taciturn, and withal, affectionate

man, who could on an occasion be very angry with those who offended him. He knew well what he could do, and never attempted that which was beyond his power. "How are you, Mr. Harkaway?" said Harry.

"How are you, Mr. Annesley; how are you?" said the master, with all the grace of which he was capable. But Harry caught a tone in his voice which he thought implied displeasure. And Mr. Harkaway had in truth heard the story,—how Harry had been discarded at Buston, because he had knocked the man down in the streets at night-time, and had then gone away. After that Mr. Harkaway toddled off, and Harry sat and frowned with embittered heart.

"Well, Malt-and-hops, and how are you?" This came from a fast young banker who lived in the neighbourhood, and who thus intended to show his familiarity with the brewer; but when he saw Annesley, he turned round and rode away. "Scaly trick that fellow played the other day. He knocked a fellow down, and when he thought that he was dead, he lied about it like old boots." All of which made itself intelligible to Harry. He told himself that he had always hated that banker.

"Why do you let such a fellow as that call you Malt-and-hops?" he said to Joshua.

"What, young Florin? He's a very good fellow, and doesn't mean anything."

"A vulgar cad, I should say."

Then he rode on in silence till he was addressed by an old gentleman of the county who had known his father for the last thirty years. The old gentleman had had nothing about him to recommend him either to Harry's hatred or love, till he spoke; and after that Harry hated him. "How d'you do, Mr. Annesley?" said the old gentleman, and then rode on. Harry knew that the old man had condemned him as the others had done, or he would never have called him Mr. Annesley. He felt that he was "blown upon" in his own county, as well as by the Ingoldsbys down in Kent.

They had but a moderate day's sport, going a considerable distance in search of it, till an incident arose which gave quite an interest to the field generally, and nearly brought Joshua Thorroughbung into a scrape. They were drawing a covert which was undoubtedly the property of their own hunt,—or rather just going to draw it,—when all of a sudden they became

aware that every hound in the pack was hunting. Mr. Harkaway at once sprang from his usual cold apathetic manner into full action. But they who knew him well could see that it was not the excitement of joy. He was in an instant full of life, but it was not the life of successful enterprise. He was perturbed and unhappy, and his huntsman, Dillon,—a silent, cunning, not very popular man, who would obey his master in everything,—began to move about rapidly, and to be at his wit's end. The younger men prepared themselves for a run, one of those sudden short decisive spurts which come at the spur of the moment, and on which a man, if he is not quite awake to the demands of the moment, is very apt to be left behind. But the old stagers had their eyes on Mr. Harkaway and knew that there was something amiss. Then there appeared another field of hunters, first one man leading them, then others following, and after them the first ruck and then the crowd. It was apparent to all who knew anything that two packs had joined. These were the Hitchiners, as the rival sportsmen would call them, and this was the Hitchin Hunt, with Mr. Fairlawn their master. Mr. Fairlawn was also an old man, popular no doubt in his own county, but by no means beloved by Mr. Harkaway. Mr. Harkaway used to declare how Mr. Fairlawn had behaved very badly about certain common coverts about thirty years ago, when the matter had to be referred to a committee of masters. No one in these modern days knew aught of the quarrel, or cared. The men of the two hunts were very good friends, unless they met under the joint eyes of the two masters, and then they were supposed to be bound to hate each other. Now the two packs were mixed together, and there was only one fox between them.

The fox did not trouble them long. He could hardly have saved himself from one pack, but very soon escaped from the fangs of the two. Each hound knew that his neighbour hound was a stranger, and in scrutinising the singularity of the occurrence, lost all the power of hunting. In ten minutes there were nearly forty couples of hounds running hither and thither, with two huntsmen and four whips swearing at them with strange voices, and two old gentlemen giving orders each in opposition to the other. Then each pack was got together, almost on the same ground, and it was necessary that some-

thing should be done. Mr. Harkaway waited to see whether Mr. Fairlawn would ride away quickly to his own country. He would not have spoken to Mr. Fairlawn if he could have helped it. Mr. Fairlawn was some miles away from his country. He must have given up the day for lost had he simply gone away. But there was another covert a mile off, and he thought that one of his hounds had "shown a line"—or said that he thought so. Now, it is well known that you may follow a hunted fox through whatever country he may take you to, if only your hounds are hunting him continuously. And one hound for that purpose is as good as thirty, and if a hound can only "show a line" he is held to be hunting. Mr. Fairlawn was quite sure that one of his hounds had been showing a line and had been whipped off it by one of Mr. Harkaway's men. The man swore that he had only been collecting his own hounds. On this plea Mr. Fairlawn demanded to take his whole pack into Greasegate Wood,—the very covert that Mr. Harkaway had been about to draw. "I'm d—— if you do!" said Mr. Harkaway, standing, whip in hand, in the middle of the road, so as to prevent the enemy's huntsman passing by with his hounds. It was afterwards declared that Mr. Harkaway had not been heard to curse and swear for the last fifteen years. "I'm d—— if I don't!" said Mr. Fairlawn, riding up to him. Mr. Harkaway was ten years the older man, and looked as though he had much less of fighting power. But no one saw him quail or give an inch. Those who watched his face declared that his lips were white with rage and quivered with passion.

To tell the words which passed between them after that would require Homer's pathos and Homer's imagination. The two old men scowled and scolded at each other and, had Mr. Fairlawn attempted to pass, Mr. Harkaway would certainly have struck him with his whip. And behind their master a crowd of the Puckeridge men collected themselves, foremost among whom was Joshua Thoroughbung. "Take 'em round to the covert by Winnipeg Lane," said Mr. Fairlawn to his huntsman. The man prepared to take his pack round by Winnipeg Lane, which would have added a mile to the distance. But the huntsman, when he had got a little to the left, was soon seen scurrying across the country in the direction of the covert, with a dozen others at his heels, and the hounds follow-

ing him. But old Mr. Harkaway had seen it too, and having possession of the road, galloped along it at such a pace that no one could pass him. All the field declared that they had regarded it as impossible that their master should move so fast. And Dillon, and the whips, and Thoroughbung, and Harry Annesley, with half-a-dozen others, kept pace with him. They would not sit there and see their master outmanœuvred by any lack of readiness on their part. They got to the covert first, and there, with their whips drawn, were ready to receive the second pack. Then one hound went in without an order; but for their own hounds they did not care. They might find a fox and go after him, and nobody would follow them. The business here at the covert-side was more important and more attractive.

Then it was that Mr. Thoroughbung nearly fell into danger. As to the other hounds, Mr. Fairlawn's hounds, doing any harm in the covert, or doing any good for themselves or their owners, that was out of the question. The rival pack was already there, with their noses up in the air, and thinking of anything but a fox; and this other pack, the Hitchiners, were just as wild. But it was the object of Mr. Fairlawn's body-guard to say that they had drawn the covert in the teeth of Mr. Harkaway, and to achieve this one of the whips thought that he could ride through the Puckeridge men, taking a couple of hounds with him. That would suffice for triumph.

But to prevent such triumph on the part of the enemy Joshua Thoroughbung was prepared to sacrifice himself. He rode right at the whip, with his own whip raised, and would undoubtedly have ridden over him had not the whip tried to turn his horse sharp round, stumbled, and fallen in the struggle, and had not Thoroughbung, with his horse, fallen over him.

It will be the case that a slight danger or injury in one direction will often stop a course of action calculated to create greater dangers and worse injuries. So it was in this case. When Dick, the Hitchin whip, went down, and Thoroughbung, with his horse, was over him,—two men and two horses struggling together on the ground,—all desire to carry on the fight was over. The huntsman came up, and at last Mr. Fairlawn also, and considered it to be their duty to pick up Dick, whose breath was knocked out of him by the

weight of Joshua Thoroughbong, and the Puckeridge side felt it to be necessary to give their aid to the valiant brewer. There was then no more attempt to draw the covert. Each general in gloomy silence took off his forces, and each afterwards deemed that the victory was his. Dick swore, when brought to himself, that one of his hounds had gone in, whereas Squire 'Arkaway "had sworn most 'orrid oaths that no 'Itchiner 'ound should ever live to put his nose in. One of 'is 'ounds 'ad, and Squire 'Arkaway would have to be——" Well, Dick declared that he would not say what would happen to Mr. Harkaway.

TWICE ACROSS THE CHANNEL WHEN CHARLES WAS KING.

FIRST—TO NORMANDY AND PARIS.

ONE day (or for three or four days) in the summer of 1625, "the winde . . . did only rock the billow, and seemed indeed to dandle the Ocean; you would have thought . . . that the seas had only danced to the wind's whistle, or that the Winde straining itself to a Treble, and the seas by a Disapason supplying the Base, had tuned a Coranto to our ship . . . a nimble Galliard filled with Capers."

The very words themselves—as words will—flow into melody; and surely it was good to be going to Normandy and Paris when all was proceeding in such pretty fashion. Besides, the fascinating Buckingham had just bade adieu to French territory. He had been paying that brilliant visit there by order of James the King, when his mission had been to show Henrietta Maria how charming an English gallant was; and to give Henrietta Maria a foretaste, as it might be, of the charming gallantry with which an English prince, Baby Charles, would greet her. Moreover, the fascinating Buckingham—only thirty-three years of age then, and having but three more years of fascination left to him before that fatal knife of Felton's was to strike him dead—Buckingham had made his brilliant visit more brilliant on an account peculiarly his own. The gallantry with which he was to impress the French princess turned, and impressed him. It became such earnest gallantry, taking such gallant form, that Richelieu grew furiously jealous. Buckingham should never enter Paris again, he was resolved. He would wring a dictum from Louis that the English favourite need not be entrusted with an

embassy any more, since he would not be received. It could be carried out, of course, with the mastery and the subtlety that were the cardinal's habit: and it was carried out; the result being that Buckingham, hot with indignation, stole back to the princess's palace straight, passionately swearing that he would gain admittance to her presence, were all the power of France bestirred to hinder him. And with all of the talk of all of this echoing over France, and at this side here in England, and with the splendour of the royal nuptials that took place in Paris by proxy, transforming the French princess by anticipation into an English queen, there had come the brief spring illness of James, with his death and the accession of Charles, there had come the beautiful May days, bringing Henrietta Maria to English ground the new king's new bride, and it followed necessarily that French doings and the French language, that French customs and the French country, that French attendants and French demeanour, were the main topics once more at court and in the coffee-house, at the table and in the universities, making all who could afford to take a voyage to France, as it was called, at once stimulated to take it, and making all who could write a survey of France, as it was called, at once stimulated to write it, since a survey was an outcome of a voyage quite à la mode, and was sure to be eagerly expected.

When, then, Peter Heylyn (not D.D., and not theological pugilist till afterwards), of Hart Hall, Oxon, and one Mr. Levett, of Lincoln's Inn, his friend, determined to leave divinity and law for a space, and to brave the hardships of foreign travel, there was plentiful motive for it. When, too, the friends found, as Heylyn's opening page says, that the winds and the waves, the treble and the bass, the diapasons and galliards, and corantos and capers, were all allied together so harmoniously and hilariously, it is clear that the French trip opened delightfully, and that capital things might be expected, from it. So, too, capital things came. Landing at Dieppe, Peter Heylyn says: "In my life I never saw corn-fields more large and lovely. . . . The country of Normandie is enriched with a fat and liking soil. . . . It is everywhere beset with Apple-trees." A little farther on it is "beset with Cherry-trees," with "Vines yet green, the Wheat ready for the sithe," with "a various and delightful mixture

of colours that no art could have expressed more delectably." Arrived at Amiens, the church "questionlesse is one of the most glorious piles of building under the heavens. . . . The divinity of the workmanship . . . is infinitely above the ambition of imitation. . . . I am not well able to judge whether the Quire or the Chappell of King Henry the Seventh at Westminster be the more exquisite piece of Architecture," but "the front of Welles or Peterborough, which we do so much fame in England, deserve not to be named in the same myriad of years as this Church at Amiens." When there, "perhaps you will fall into the same extasie that I did, and pick a quarell with nature and the heavens that they had not made you all into an eye." A little check came, an inconvenient conservatism preventing access to many of the extatic things to which Heylyn desired access; but this only brings valuable testimony concerning the superior liberality prevailing at home.

"No people," run Heylyn's words, "are so open in shewing their places of strength and safety unto strangers as the English. For a dozen of Ale, a forriner may pace over the curtain of Portsmouth, and measure every stone and bulwark of it. A French crown fathometh the wals of Dover Castle; and for a pinte of wine one may see the nakednesse of the blockhouses at Gravesend."

Also, the cottagers of Normandy, in their severe and rigid poverty, brought good evidence, in a similar manner, sideways, of what the young Oxonian had observed in England.

"The miserable French peasants," he says, "have no butter salted up against winter, no powdring tub, no Puellein in the Rick-Barten, no flesh in the pot or at the spit; and which is worst, no money to buy them. At Wakes and Feasts . . . you may see plenty; but at other times the best provision they can show you is a piece of Bacon wherewith they fatten their pottage, and now and then the inwards of beasts killed for the Gentlemen. As for their drink, they have recourse to the next Fountain;" and "the bread which they eat is of the coarsest flowre, and so black that it cannot admit the name of brown."

For French cookery, that magical and economical French cookery to be met with, as is boasted, in French country-places, to the shame of every English wife, it was not discoverable in 1625 at any rate, and according to Peter Heylyn. "Let us now

walke into the Kitching," he says—he at that moment being at Roan (Rouen). "Here we found a most terrible execution committed on the person of a pullet; my Hostess (cruell woman) had cut the throat of it, and without plucking off the feathers, tore it into pieces with her hands, and after took away skin and feathers together, just as we strip Rabbets in England; this done, it was clapped into a pan, and fryed into a supper." On another occasion, "At Pontoise we met with a Rabbet, and we thought we had found a great purchase," for there was monotony in French food, as well as "terrible execution committed" on it, and of this "Rabbet," Heylyn says further, "larded it was, as all meat is in the countrey, otherwise it is so lean, it would never endure roasting. In the eating it proved so tough that I could not be perswaded that it was any more than three removes from that Rabbet which was in the Ark. The price half a Crown English"—equal to ten or twelve shillings to-day—and therefore proving either that a rabbit was a rare bit at Pontoise in 1625, or else that a Pontoise innkeeper knew how to make out a bill. Yet, on the point of French cookery in some of its branches, Heylyn says his expectations had even then been bid to run very high. "I have heard," he bears witness, "much fame of French cooks, but their skill lyeth not in the handling of Beef and Matton. They have . . . good fancies, and are speciall fellows for the making of puffed pastes and the ordering of banquets . . . but if you can digest the sluttishnesse of the cookery (which is most abominable at first sight) I dare trust you in a Garrison."

A wedding being part of the travellers' experiences at Pontoise, Heylyn makes note of it. "I saw Mrs. Bride returning from the Church," he says. "The day before, she had been somewhat of the condition of a kitchen-wench, but now so tricked up with scarfs, rings, and cross-garters, that you never saw a Whitsun-lady better rigged. I should much have applauded the fellowes fortune, if he could have married the clothes; but God be merciful to him, he is chained to the wench!" It is an ejaculation forming fitting prelude to the "voyagers'" opinion of the Normandy women generally. They are, cries Heylyn, quite vexed about it, "of an indifferent stature, their bodies straight, and their wastes commonly small, but whether it be so by nature or by much restraining I cannot say. Then he com-

plains, "You cannot gather a better character of a Frenchwoman than from her prating, which is tedious and infinite . . . their tongues are like a watch, you need not wind them up above once in twelve heures." To prove which, the nettled Heylyn declares that "A dame of Paris came in Coach with us from Roan; fourteen heures we were together, of which time (I'll take my oath upon it) her tongue fretted away eleaven heures and fifty-seven minutes!"

At Rouen, there was Our Lady's Chapel, of course; and a Virgin there that quite restored Heylyn's good humour.

"A jolly plump Ladie, she seemeth to be," he writes, "of a flaxen hair, a ruddy lip, and a chearefull complexion." The figure was "attired in a Red Mantle, laced with two gold laces, a handsome ruffe about her neck, a vail of fine lawne hanging down her back; . . . and in her left arme she holds her son, in his side-coat, a black hat, and a golden hat-band."

Leaving Rouen, where "the attire of the head is made of linen, pure and decent," as the Normandy cap still retains its cleanliness and picturesqueness, Heylyn did not find so much to admire in the villages. In those "the attire of the head cannot possibly be anything else than an old dish-clout turned out of service, or the corner of a tablecloth reserved from washing." He did not get to the villages in very comfortable fashion, that is one thing. From Dieppe to Rouen he and his friend travelled in "a Cart with three carcases of horses; . . . the rain fell in us through our tilt, which for the many holes in it one would have thought to have been a net. The durt brake plentifully in upon us through the rails of our Chariot; and the unequall and ill-proportioned pase of it, startled almost every bone of us." From Rouen to Pontoise they rode in a waggon holding ten, "much of a kin to Gravesend's barge;" on leaving any of the inns, they were met by "a throng of ill-faces, whining out this dity, 'Pour les servants'"—backsheesh, it will be observed, this side of the Mediterranean; inside the inns, they found the men-servants "wait alwayes with their hats on their heads," whilst "bid one of them wipe your boots, he presently hath recourse to the curtains;" and whilst at Tournay, which was stopped at between Estampes and Orleans, the "voyagers" were threatened with quite a little adventure.

"By that time we had cleared ourselves of our pottage," writes Heylyn, in other

words, when we had finished our soup, "there entred upon us three uncouth fellows . . . with hats on their heads like covered dishes." It made the Oxonians leap to their feet, and clap their hands to their weapons to be prepared. But these "pretty parcels of man's flesh were neither better nor worse but even arrant fidlers, and such which in England we should not hold worthy of the whipping-post." They "abused our ears with an harsh lesson,* and after their song ended, the master of them draweth a dish out of his pocket, and layeth it before us, into which we were to cast our benevolence." And the benevolence—alias the tax, the contribution—had to be cast; for "Custome," says Heylyn, "hath allowed them a Sol for each man at the table; they expect no more, and they will take no lesse." Still, as sol was the old word for sou, and Heylyn reports the sols to have been made of "tinne"—six doubles going to one sol, and two deniers to a double—the price of the entertainment did not add much to the cost of travel; and it is well, now two centuries and a half have passed, that it was given, and that this note remains of its style and manner.

At Orleans, which Heylyn thought exactly like Worcester, there was no lack of reminiscences, and there were reliques to be seen of the Holy Maid. "This brave virago," Heylyn calls her, "this lusty lass of Lorrein," "with me she shall be ranked amongst the famous captains of her times," and he changes from the prose of his "survey" into rhyme, he gets so warm in his admiration.

Speak boldly of her and of her alone,
That never Lady was as good as Jone,

are two of his lines; wherein the old adage, "When the candles are out, Joan is as good as my lady," is simply turned about, and shows itself to be his motif, or "lesson," clearly.

The University Library in this Joan's city was visited. "I should have thought it to have been the warehouse of some second-hand Bookseller," Heylyn declares. "Those few books which were there were as old as Printing, and could hardly make amongst them one cover to resist the violence of a rat. They stood not up end-long, but lay one upon the other, and were joynted together with cobwebs instead of strings." And those few books that were

* Is there memory of "My lessons make no music in three parts?"—Taming of the Shrew.

there, Heylyn continues, "could not have been looked into since the long reign of ignorance;" to account for which he cries humorously, "the poor paper that makes them is troubled with the disease called *Noli me tangere*." A monk, too, near by, roused Heylyn to a jest. The reverend father was one "who had an especial hand upon sore eyes," with this provocative condition, "none were capable of cure from him . . . but distressed Damosels." It was scarcely likely this could pass; and Heylyn, seeing "a whole convoy of these Ladies errant . . . come on foot two days' journey to clear their eyesight," broke out thus: "I dare assure them they should recover their sight," for "when they come home, they shall see—their folly!"

As he continued his journey he continued to make similar moralizations. "The French in general," he says, "are termed the King's Asses"—i.e. beasts of burden; Atlases, or Caryatides, for ever bending under a back-load—because "they are kept in such a perpetuated course of drudgery; . . . and so may these Men" (in Normandy) "peculiarly be called the Asses of the French, or the veriest Asses of the rest." They "yet pay high rents, but if they get a few pounds richer than their neighbours"—it is not as Heylyn knew it to be in England, where "the Gentry take a delight in having their Tenants thrive under them," it is that—"their Lord enhaunceth their rents directly and tells the King's taskmasters;" that so, of course, they might be newly taxed accordingly. They presented another feature too, less pitiable, and not so indicative of the causes of the next century's Revolution. "Mr. Camden* says the Inhabitants of our Country of Norfolk . . . are pretty fellows to finde out quirks in Law, for to it they will, whatsoever it cost them;" and from Heylyn's observations the "inhabitants" of Normandy were the Norfolkians' match. Touching this legal topic, Littleton's *Tenure* was a law book handed by "one of our Company" to a "French Doctor of the Lawes;" there being the hope that since, like all early English legal authorities, it was written in Norman-French, French and English ruling would be found expressed in the same terms. But Norman-French, as beaten, and warped, and eked out to fit English Jurisprudence, was not the Norman-French of the French

law known to that individual M. l'Avocat or M. le Notaire with whom the voyagers had parley. He turned over Littleton's pages; he used all the skill he possessed, no doubt; but "protested that in three lines he could not understand three words of it."

It is no matter. The journey to Paris proceeded—whether by means of "carcases of horses," or of horses whose "pase" stood better criticism. And then, arrived at the fair capital, Heylyn's notes are still—notable. "The streets of Paris are many of them of a lawfull and competent breadth," he says, "well pitched under the foot with fair and large peble;" but "the least rain maketh it very slippery and troublesome;" and "this I am confident of, that the nastiest lane in London is Frankincense and Juniper to the sweetest street in this City." The houses "are just after the fashion" of "the houses of the new mould in London;"* and they are "distinguished by signs as with us, and every sign there is printed in Capitall letters what signe it is, neither is it more than need, for the old shift of This is a Cock and This is a Bull was never more requisite in the infancy of painting than in this City," because "hideous and without resemblance to the thing signified are most of these pencil works." Again: *Tempting Articles de Paris* were not seen by Peter Heylyn; nor was he moved by Paris gloves. Cutlers there, he declares, "are abominable; gloves worse." "You may finde nimble danciers," among the Parisians, "prety fidlers for a toy"—a "fidler" being a *vaguenaudier*, and a *vaguenaudier* a trifler, a dangler—"you may finde a Tayler that can trick you up after the best and newest fashion;" and Parisians are "perfect at toothpicks, beard-brushes, and the cutting of a seal;" but "I perswade my self that the two severall ranks of shops in Cheapside can shew more plate, and more variety of Mercery wares, good and rich, then three parts of Paris." It was a "perswasion" of a broad bold sort, certainly; yet capable most likely of being borne out by facts; since French merchants, Heylyn says, "make a great marvell that some of London merchants should be worth one hundred thousand crowns, though we account that estate among us not to be so wonderfull;"

* Those of brick that were being just built by the Earl of Arundel on the Thames' side or strand. London in the mass was of wood; for there were yet forty years to go by, before the Great Fire.

* Camden had only died two years previously.

and this test of the results of merchandize is very good groundwork by which the merchandize itself can be judged.

The sight-seeing at Paris included a visit to St. Denis, where the tongue of the clerk "ran so fast that the fellow that sheweth the Tombs at Westminster is no more to be compared to him for the volubility of his chops than a Capuchin to a Jesuite." It included a visit to La Sainte Chapelle, where Heylyn received another conservative check, this time because of his theology, not his nationality. He was Protestant, or, in French parlance, Huguenot; and "the Reliques were not visible to an Hugonot's eyes, though"—naturally enough—"me thinketh they might have considered that my money was Catholique." The hospital, or "Hostel Dieu," threw its doors open in more kindly and candid fashion. Heylyn found seven hundred beds in it, and in every bed two persons (let that be noted, as evidence of the sweet customs of the Merry Days of Old, and the better nearness to sweetness that things have drifted into to-day); and Heylyn walked through "a long gallery, having four ranks of beds, two close to the two wals, and two in the middle;" he noted that "the beds are sutable one to the other, their Valence, Curtains, and Rugs, being all yellow;" he saw a second "Chamber dedicated only to sick women;" he saw a third, an Accident Ward it would be termed now, "with four ranks of beds . . . for such as were somewhat wounded, . . . the furniture thereof was blew;" and with most of this being excellent fore-runner of what hospitals have grown to be now, he saw that "all things are there kept so cleanly, neatly, and orderly, that it is sweeter walking there than in the best street of Paris, none excepted."

A singular incident shall end this short look into Heylyn's First Trip Across The Channel. In his company at the hotel, in Paris, was "a German Lord;" and there came to visit the German Lord "a French gallant." The gallant spoke to Heylyn in Latin—that convenient universal language, then, of the instructed of all nationalities; and whilst Heylyn was returning Latin answers, the gallant's costume, remarkable for richness, was admiringly and closely scanned. He "had a suit of Turkieprogram doubled with Taffeta, cut with long slashes, or carbonado's, after the French fashion, and belaid with bugle lace. . . . His cloke was also of Turkie program, cut upon black Taffeta. . . .

Through the openings of his doublet appeared his shirt of the purest Holland, and wrought with curious needlework; the points at his waste and knees all edged with a silver edging; his garters, roses, and hat-band, suitable to his points," i.e., matching them; and he wore "a beaver-hat, and a pair of silk stockins." He rises before the mind, as the items are told off, complete. Had a painter, then, wanted to paint a smart Parisian—being carried, say, "somewhat wounded," into that chamber of the Hostel Dieu, where there were four ranks of beds with their rugs and curtains and valences all suitable in blue—there, in Heylyn's description, was the minutest inventory to paint by. And then, there was this: The next morning, a barber being summoned, and one having been shown into Heylyn's room, who eagerly "fell to work about me to the earning of a quardeson," there occurred a look up, in the course of the operation, and the barber and the rich-dressed gallant proved to be one!

"In my life," cries Heylyn, "I had never more adoe to hold in my laughter!"

Now, Southey says, alluding to Dr. Heylyn: "If thou hast not read his Survey of the State of France—Reader, thou hast not read one of our 'liveliest books of travel.'" It is a judgment not likely to be disputed. To which it must just be added, shortly, that there was a special reason for Heylyn's liveliness. He was, at that time, a wit. He lived amongst wits. At Oxford (Heylyn was of Hart Hall first, and then Magdalen), wit, or what passed for wit, was rippling about; Corbett, the Dean of Christ Church there, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, "loving to his last boys' plays" (vide the *Athenæ Oxonienses*) being a bountiful provider of it, and having himself "voyaged" to France just before, with the result of a "survey" that was witty all through; and whilst it was the mode at the moment, at the University, for everybody to be witty on a topic that made everybody else witty, if Peter Heylyn had not written on Normandy and Paris to the sound of corantos, galliards, diapasons, and so forth, he would have been going against a stream that flowed, as yet, with such sunny placidity, it bore no symptoms of a turn by which it would soon all be stemmed. An instance shall be put down, in passing, of this surface of fun, or wit, or liveliness, at the University, before her walls were as grey as they are now, and when her courts and cloisters were not

quite so beautifully full of reverend echoes. It is very brief, and very characteristic: Corbett, the Christ Church dean, was preaching on Sunday morning, August the 26th, 1621. The king—James, staying at Woodstock—was present; Heylyn and the others noticing that the merry preacher had “his band starch’t clean”—a fact provoking humorous attention to begin with. In the evening the Oxonians were to entertain the king with a comedy; they chose Barten Holyday’s *Technogamia*, or, *The Marriage of the Arts*; the play flagged and dragged horribly, what with the young students’ wit and the wine that helped it, or what with, as a Wood suggests, the play “being too grave for the king, and too scholastic for the auditory;” and there came about the fiasco that the king, killed with ennui, made a move again and again to leave his chair. He was persuaded much against his will to remain—royalty having its hard imposition of etiquette as well as subjects; but the whole stream of academic fun burst down upon the playwright, and the players to the full. One adept wrote:

At Christ Church “Marriage” done before the King,
Lest that those mates should want an offering,
The King himself did offer—What, I pray?
He offer’d twice or thrice to go away!

Peter Heylyn wrote Whoop Holiday—punning on the playwright’s name—“a witty copie of verses;” the dean himself “put in for one . . . for which he was reprov’d by the graver sort;” and epigram after epigram being aimed at the unlucky affair, till it was long before the memory of it was allowed to die.

Likewise, as well as there being a reason why liveliness was expected of Peter Heylyn, there was a special reason why his liveliness over his *Voyage to Normandy and Paris* should take the form of a good slur on France and a similarly-measured glorification of England and the English. He had published his *Cosmography* in 1619, two years before the wits’ matter at Woodstock, he being then twenty years old, and having commenced his book on the 22nd of February, finished it on the 29th of April—a piece of liveliness remarkable. His post had already for months past been that of Cosmographical Lecturer at Magdalen—he so ripe a scholar, with a reputation of having “profited in trivials to a miracle.” This had emboldened him to dedicate his book to Prince Charles, by whom it had been graciously received;

and, so far, all things had progressed to excellence. But in 1623, two years before embarking for Normandy, he had enlarged his *Cosmography*; he had re-prayed Prince Charles to re-receive it in this bigger form, being introduced this time by his new-found patron, Henry, Lord Danvers, the future Earl of Danby, who “spake very affectionately in his commendations;” and, lo! his luck was altered, and all turned out as badly as it could turn. Not that Charles compassed this. He, as soon as his elder brother was dead, and he himself had become the right goal, had had books dedicated to him by the shelf full, and even had he been of a scholarly and not a pleasurable turn, he could not have been expected to have found time enough to have looked at text and margin and “*Præfatory Epistle*,” at section, premiss, scholium, errata, or running-title of a tithe of the volumes laid so prodigally at his feet. It was different, however, with the king, his father. He wrote books, and, as a consequence—or was it a forerunner?—he read them. He looked through Peter Heylyn’s *Cosmography*, at any rate, the book having been brought under his notice by John Young, Dean of Winchester, and, lighting upon a particular passage, he was incensed. Peter Heylyn had given precedence to France over England! Straightly, swiftly, the new Lord Keeper was appealed to (John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, taking office in 1621), and James resolutely commanded the *Cosmography* to be called in. It made ruin stand before the young Oxford author. It cut off preferment, court favour, patronage of every kind, and his dismay can be conjectured. He was still at Oxford, a Fellow of Magdalen, and Oxford friends rallied round him to condole, to counsel; all wit gone out of his particular horizon, though epigrams—as he probably suspected—would have been trembling at the point of several pens. In the end, he wrote a full explanation of the objectionable passage to Dr. Young, the dean who had taken the book to the king. He repaired to court to entreat the prince, in memory of his double acceptance of his double dedication, to “salve his sore;” and the king, pressed, and “perusing the writing,” finally gave new instructions to the Lord Keeper, and “rested very well contented with the matter.”

Such risks, however, were not to be run twice. It was quite easy to give place to England, to represent the English as

considerably in advance of the French; and, though this representation may in addition have been perfectly in accordance with Peter Heylyn's observations and opinions, yet, when this small slice of his personal history is served, it makes a livelier sound still tune up amongst his galliards and corantos, and stimulates curiosity as to the style he will assume in his Second Trip across the Channel.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

XI.

IN the early morning we rattle through the grey quiet streets of Inverness, we cross the river, grey too and sleepy-looking as if it had made a night of it with the market-people, and then we pass along a countrified road, and wind up a hill of respectable steepness, that would be quite a notable hill down south, when we suddenly pull up at a bustling crowded quay, with a big steamer alongside, the steam rattling hoarsely through her escape-pipe. It is a surprise certainly to find such a big sea-going craft up among the hills, a canal boat we were prepared for, a steam launch, or something of the kind. But then this Caledonian Canal is on rather a grand scale. It cost a million of money, and that sixty years ago, when people thought more of millions than now. And though it opens out a water-way of more than sixty miles from sea to sea, yet there are only twenty-four miles of canal which join together three charming and romantic lochs like pearls on a silver string.

There is a pleasant liveliness and bustle on the quay this morning. Three or four omnibuses full of people have turned up and are coming on board—the people, not the omnibuses, that is—and there are a few flys with passengers of more secluded habits, among them two solemn-looking young Japanese, and a youth in livery as personal attendant. A most amusing youth this last, who as soon as he gets on board sticks his livery-hat under a seat and assuming a smart travelling-cap plunges into general conversation, taking no further notice of his Japs during the rest of the voyage. Then there is the almond-eyed family who almost filled up the interior of our omnibus, but they are rather quiet and subdued just now. Indeed we are all quiet and subdued, and shall be, no doubt, till we have breakfasted. Old Angus Ross has come up to see us off, and is having some last words with Jennie, to whom he has

taken a great fancy. And as for Mary Grant, she looks positively misanthropical. She has made friends with the smallest of the almond-eyed tribe, who has made a pillow of her knee and fallen asleep. The bell rings for a third and last time, and the laggards hurry on board. The gangway is withdrawn and the steamer is off. Yes, we are fairly homeward bound. One glance at the scene we are leaving, the town clustered in the river valley, the broad river winding down to the Firth, the grey Firth beyond, broadening out to the sea, even as far as Fort George. And then to turn to the coming scenes, the bright and tranquil waters that we seem to be ever drawing towards us, sucking up, and leaving behind in a tossed and tumbled condition; the luxuriant vegetation growing down to the water's edge, the ferns, the trees, and soft lawn-like turf, and most pleasing scene of all at this present juncture, the well-spread breakfast-table in the saloon below. "An' what will ye try now, sir?" is the oft-reiterated formula of the steward in attendance. We try everything, Jock and I, and pronounce everything good.

It is quite a different world that we come out upon after breakfast. We have passed through Dochgarroch Loch and are fairly upon Loch Ness. And here reflected upon the translucent waters, are wooded promontory and rocky knoll, and the hoary towers of Urquhart Castle. And behind stretches the beautiful glen, and there among the woods is Drumnadrochit, with memories of a past generation of artists and littérateurs. And now the hills close in upon the lake rising in sheer simple heights, well-wooded and yet seamed with the beds of winter torrents, with gaps and bare places where the storms have carried devastation. They say there is a pass here at Inverfarigaig reaching inland among the mountains, but there hardly seems room to crawl between the overhanging hills. But two regular Highland lairds, in full native costume of kilt and sporran, speak of the pass as one of the finest in these parts. At least one of the lairds so pronounces it. The other has not seen it, but promises to visit it on his bicycle. Now the kilt and the bicycle don't seem to go together well somehow. Surely our Gaelic friend must wear a riding-habit when he bestrides the wheel.

A sharp rattling shower, hiding the hills and everything but the frothing waters of the lake for a time, sends everybody down below for shelter, but the shower is over

in a few minutes, and deliciously green and fresh the world looks in consequence. But Mrs. Almond-eyes—not that the eyes come from her side of the house, although she has pretty eyes of her own, too, as round and brown as hazel-nuts—however, she has taken advantage of the shower to ensconce herself in her favourite corner, well supported by cushions, and with her favourite fiction piled in numbers by her side. She is in for a real happy time, when her dreams are rudely broken in upon by her husband. "Now, Almadiva, jump about. Here's the Falls of Foyers." "Oh, Henry, must I go?" she appeals feelingly. "Yes, I expect you must," rejoins the husband doggedly. And as by this time the steamer has drawn up to the pier, everybody hurries out.

There is nothing to be seen of the waterfall from the pier—only thick woods, rising almost perpendicularly above, and a road serpentine upwards, and losing itself in the sheeny wilderness of trees. But there are waggonettes waiting to take up people who don't care to walk, and the almond-eyed family nearly fill one of these vehicles, while the interstices are filled up by Uncle Jock and Mrs. Gillies. Jennie hesitates, and finally pronounces for the vehicle. "One good turn," she whispers. And so Mary Grant and I are left to walk together, and we start upwards at full speed. All through the woods, green and sheeny, and dripping a little from the recent shower, with the sun glinting here and there, and turning the rain-drops to diamonds; and altogether a fairy alcove, only so steep in the floor that after awhile I sink exhausted on a stone. Mary shows her white teeth in a smile of triumph. "But we mustn't linger," she urges, "else we will be left behind." "There, my exhaustion was only a feint. I wanted to let the ruck of people go by, so that I might say what I wanted to say." Mary, interrupting, said that she did not believe a word of it, but that if I had breath enough to talk, I might very well climb the hill. And with that she started up the hill at a pace I had some difficulty in keeping up with. Indeed, before I could overtake her, she had vanished down the path that leads to the falls.

A charming fall is Foyers, the river leaping through a shapeless breach in the rocks, and plunging sheer down some eighty feet in a white foaming spout into the chasm below, whence rises a perpetual cloud of spray, covering its recesses with a

thin misty veil, while upon this cloud a delicate rainbow comes and goes with the glints of sunshine. The warm colouring of the rocks, the luxuriant verdure of the ferns, that cling and flourish in every crevice, and the white plume of water, with its soft yet all-pervading roar, make up a scene of grace and beauty not without sublimity.

But, Mary Grant, don't go so near the edge of that slippery rock; we can't spare you yet. But she waves aside remonstrance. She may be one of the children of the mist, but for all that she is shod with mortal shoe-leather. What is she thinking about, I wonder, as she gazes with soft dilated eyes into the whirl of foam and spray. What do people generally think about in the presence of a waterfall? There is a vague sense of rest and repose, notwithstanding the agitation of the scene. The roar of waters acts as a gentle anodyne. One could sit and listen to it all day long.

But here came the irrepressibles shouting and laughing, "La, what's this—a waterfall? Pa, where does the water fall to?" And with the arrival of two waggonette loads of tourists, there is hardly standing-room on the little platform of rock. Then with a joyous war-whoop, in all the fearlessness of ignorance, the smallest of the almond-eyes—Mary's especial favourite—rushes down a steep little path, all slimy and slippery with the recent rain, that leads to a more dangerous point lower down.

Mary darted after her, but slipped, and would have fallen if I had not caught her round the waist. We brought back the little truant squealing and kicking. And then we heard the steamer's impatient whistle down below, and we started, Mary and I, to get in advance of the rest of the walkers.

Somehow the touch of peril had moved us both. "If I had lost my jewel then," I exclaimed as soon as we had left behind the roar of the waterfall. "But indeed you must not say such things," replied Mary, looking aside. "I am not a jewel, and if I had been killed you wouldn't have cared very much." Perhaps I should not have cared, when the very thought of losing sight of her, when she leaves us this afternoon, makes me more unhappy than I can tell. Mary looks doubtful, as if wishing to believe, and yet wanting justification for her faith. "And there is Jennie too," she remarked, shaking her

head. Yes, there was Jennie, no doubt, with whom I had been fancying myself in love, rather making an effort, indeed, to be in love with her, as we were such excellent friends, that it seemed a pity that we should not be more than friends. But with Mary there had been no effort at all. I had just tumbled into it as Mary might have fallen over the precipice just now. And now that I knew the real thing, I was ashamed that I could ever have believed in the counterfeit.

"But you see I haven't had the same experience," rejoined Mary saucily, but with a smile that drove me to the point of seizing the hand that was not very decidedly withheld, and then to my disgust came whooping and hallooing through the wood, six or seven of the irrepressibles, who threw themselves en masse upon poor Mary. "Oh, you dear," cried the eldest, "you've saved poor Perkie's life, pa says, and we're all going to kiss and hug you for it." And then in a few minutes we were at the pier again, and scrambling on board the *Gondolier*, which was fretting and fuming to be off.

And next we call at Invermorriston, where there is a charming stream dashing into the lake, and a kind of little port where a yacht is lying; while under the shadow of a mountain-ash an old fisherman is pitching and tarring his old fishing-coble. And from this point there is a splendid drive among the hills to that pleasant Balmacarra we passed on the sail to Skye. I point this out to Jennie, and ask her if she would not like to run over and have another look at the island. But Jennie smiles serenely, and says no, she is quite content to look on at other people now. "But you don't seem to get on very well," cries Mrs. Gillies, who, now that Jennie's affair is arranged, is able to pursue her benevolent plans for human happiness with renewed zest. "I think you want some mutual friend to put matters straight."

But we are still speeding on, and soon the head of Loch Ness is reached, and we come into the canal again, and see the towers of Fort August close at hand—called after some long-forgotten prince of the house of Hanover—a fort that was once taken by Prince Charlie's victorious Highlanders, but speedily resumed its loyalty to its founders, after Culloden—within the enceinte of the fort, a goodly Gothic building has been built, for the purposes of a Roman Catholic

college after the model of Stoneyhurst. The students are all away now for the vacation, and the buildings almost deserted except for one or two long-robed Benedictines, who pace solemnly up and down the grassy quadrangle.

A good many of our passengers go to visit the college, and among them the almond-eyed people and Mary Grant, who is in great request among them. But I prefer a walk along the banks of the canal to Kyltra Locks, where the steamer which has a regular staircase of locks to climb, will presently overtake us. Little shops have sprung up on the route, where walking-sticks with the regular pastoral crook are made and sold, and where birds-eye tobacco and other light refreshments can be obtained. And on the way I met an old Highlander who fell into talk, and presently, finding a sympathetic listener, began to bewail the decadence of his race. They are gone—the people are gone; the gallant people that shed their blood so freely in a hundred battles that concerned them not; the people so faithful to their chiefs, so devoted to their mountain home; the people have departed landless into strange countries. "In such a glen," said the old man, pointing to a ravine in the dark mountain's side, "I remember forty families—there were four by yonder, and over there three more, and now there's not a chimney smokes among them all. In five days you could lift a regiment among these hills, and now you'd barely find five men. No, from this river-side to Cape Wrath, you shall march through the land and never meet a human soul. It is a desert now where once were thousands of happy homes. And a' for the deer. The lords must have their deer, but, eh, sirs, it's a heavy price to pay for them. Perhaps one day the country will need all her sons, and she'll look for them here in vain. Perhaps the deer will fight for her then. Such children as there were," continues the old man, warming at the memory, "straight and strong, and with limbs like young giants—and it was a hard life they lived, but they loved it; and what will pay them for the land they have lost, their own native land?"

It was a sad lament over a vanished people; over an inhabited country changed into a desert. One recalls the deeds of Norman William, destroying villages and hamlets to make a New Forest—a royal hunting-ground. But that was a small piece of mischief compared with this.

However the evil is done and we can only groan over it and pass on. And so, with a parting hand-shake to the old Highlander, once more on board the Gondolier.

We are soon out of the canal again, and sailing across Loch Oich, the softest and loveliest of the string. And here is Invergarry, green and refreshing to the sight, with a castle on the headland, the tower of some old chieftain, now surrounded by the glass-houses and gardens of modern civilisation. Nothing sweeter have we seen in all the Highlands than this Invergarry, with its mixture of wood and water, of grand mountain slopes and soft luxuriant vales. Too soon we leave Loch Oich, which is but a short three and a half miles in length, and the beauty of the day seems to have passed as we begin to descend through sundry locks to Loch Lochy. And the head of the loch is rather stern and gloomy, with two black old craft aground on the shingle, and massive slopes on either hand, as if we were entering some trench that had been cut by the giants. But there is good pasturage on the hill-sides, and countless sheep thereon; although so steep that the road is kept up with difficulty, sometimes by the margin of the lake, and sometimes terraced on the hill; with carts and horses and men, looking like mice. We are now in the country of the Camerons, and Achnagarry Castle lies to our right—the home of the head of the clan, with the ruins of the old castle close by, burnt by Butcher Cumberland after Culloden.

And with this our chain of lochs comes to an end; it is all canal now till we reach salt water; a pleasant placid sail, the banks a pleasant green, with a road alongside, and a farmer trotting homewards and matching his snorting galloway against the steamer. And now we catch our first view of Ben Nevis, the champion mountain of Great Britain, the snow still lying deep on its dark flanks.

Then as we approach the end of the canal a new scene opens out upon us, full of interest and beauty—a grand meeting-place of loch and mountain. A green and fertile plain stretches away into the recesses of the hills, with a winding river and grey castle towers and mansion houses among their thick groves. The smoke of hamlets rises into the clear mountain air, and over all frowns the big bulk of Ben Nevis with his mantle of snow. And all this—which is a surprising view from a canal you must

own—all this, accompanied with a strange wild light of sunshine struggling through wild sea-clouds, a light that brings the verdure of the valley and the dark threatening gloom of the mountain into most effective contrast.

Another craft, too, has almost completed her voyage, a sturdy trading-cutter, bluff-bowed and roomy in the hold, her master tugging away at the tow-rope, while his wife, with a baby at her bosom, sits tranquilly by the tiller and steers. And this is all the traffic we have seen upon the canal during the voyage excepting a fine screw steamer belonging to the same line as the Gondolier, which carries cargo and passengers from Glasgow to Inverness, passing through all the lochs from sea to sea. After this it is not surprising to learn that the canal barely pays the expenses of working it, and without the tourist traffic there would no doubt be a considerable yearly deficit. However, we may be grateful to the people, whoever they might have been, who put down the million that it cost and opened out a route where the lazy traveller may pass at his ease, in the midst of magnificent scenery, through the very heart of the Highlands.

But we have come to our moorings at the pier, and there is a general scramble now for the omnibuses that are waiting to take us down to the pier at Corpach for the sea-going steamer. And as we sit on the roof of the omnibus we are on a level with the roofs of the neat little white-washed cottages, with their blue slate roofs, patched here and there with scraps of tin that bear the marks of American or Australian purveyors of preserved meats. And there is the neat school-house, and the lads and lassies turning out with their bare legs and feet, and their satchels crammed with books, perhaps an embryo Thomas Carlyle among these rosy but sage-looking laddies. And the kye are coming home over the fern-covered banks, and race us down for a short, but gallant burst, finally poking their heads over a gate and pretending not to see us pass. And so we pass the big hotel at Banavie, where our arrival puts in motion all the inner machinery. Bells ring, waiters run about, bills are paid, rooms are chosen, the whole clockwork in violent motion for a few minutes, and then we pass on and everything resumes its former tranquillity.

But at Corpach—what a divine half-hour was that upon the pier at Corpach! For

it came on to rain a regular sea-shower, hard and driving, and yet cheerful withal, with sunshine looming somewhere overhead. And under the half-shadow of a luggage fourgon, with the same bit of tarpaulin over our shoulders and the same umbrella over our heads, did Mary and I foregather during that delightful twenty minutes. Shall I tell you what we said? The whole of this number would not be sufficient for a full and accurate report. It was the history of two lives that henceforth meant to flow on together.

And then, as the dark curtain of rain and mist passed away, to rest, gloomy and threatening, on the flank of Ben Nevis, we descried the steamer, her wafts of steam deadly white against the black clouds, while the skirl of bagpipes comes, softened by distance, over the waters.

Blessings on thee, Mountaineer, for the half-hour you kept us waiting on Corpach Pier!

And with the Mountaineer comes a tall handsome mountain-chief in kilt and Glegarry, whom Mary joyfully hails as her brother. And we take our leave of Glenmohr, or the Great Glen, which is the general name of the great rift in the mountain ranges through we have just passed, and sail away over to Fort William, while the piper, a brave old soldier, white-headed and hung with war-medals, plays a piper's reel, marching proudly up and down.

Mary's brother, Longashpan, for it would never do to address him as "Mr. Grant"—the correct way of spelling, by the way, is, I am told, Tochalashfern, but I mean to stick to my own way which does not strain unduly the resources of the alphabet. Longashpan then is full of a boundless hospitality. Everybody must come and stay for a week, for a month, till the shooting is over. But no, Uncle Jock firmly shakes his head. And Jennie whispers the cause. "Mrs. Grant looks down upon the Gillies family; we are not pedigree Highlanders, don't you see."

There are no soldiers at Fort William now; the last of them marched away somewhere about the time of the Crimean War, when all the Highland forts, except Fort George, by Inverness, which is something in the way of a coast defence, were formally abandoned. But there, zig-zagging up the bluff flank of a mountain buttress is one of the military roads of the once celebrated General Wade, all that is left

of whose fame survives in the well-known couplet:

Had you seen this road before it was made,
You'd lift up your hands and bless General
Wade.

As for this particular road, it is still a good road in places, although as it only leads from one military fort to another it has long been abandoned to decay. But with practical sagacity, instead of building bridges over the mountain torrents, which the floods of winter would long ago have washed away, the general levelled and paved the beds of the streams at the points where the road crosses, and these crossing-places are still available, and used by the country people after more than a century's neglect and abandonment.

As we leave Fort William, a pleasant-looking little town of grey-stone, with villas and terraces springing up on the hillsides, there is a grand burst of sunshine lighting up the snug town, and the little port with its two or three trading-brigs, their white sails hanging loosely from the yards; and clothing the misty head of Ben Nevis in rainbow hues. And then we steam away down Loch Aber, and through the narrows, where rocky promontories seem to bar the way, and the tide is rushing like a mill-stream into Loch Linnhe, and then rounding the point to our left by a rocky channel with frequent buoys and landmarks into Loch Leven, not Queen Mary's Loch Leven, of course, but the loch that opens out to gloomy Glencoe, that pass of evil fame. And at Ballachulish we land a considerable band of tourists who mean to drive through the pass, the entrance to which we see, a cauldron of gloomy clouds, with a weird and solemn darkness brooding over its dreary recesses. No, let us stick to calm seas and sunny skies, and leave Glencoe to its memories of horrid treachery and midnight massacre.

As we round once more into Loch Linnhe, behold a boat from the western shore, manned by six sturdy rowers; it shoots across towards the steamer which slackens speed to meet it. It is the boat from Longashpan; the moment for parting has come. Mary turns a little pale. The almond-eyed girls surround her, weeping and wailing. Longashpan invites them all. "Come and stay a month," he cries. "I wish they would take him at his word," says Jennie maliciously, "Mrs. Grant would make them happy perhaps." But the stockbroker shakes his head non-

chalantly. "Next time we come this way we'll stop and take our tea." But I have one minute alone with Mary as we get her wraps out of the cabin. A kiss, a hand-clasp, she is gone, and the boat is far away, making towards the shore. There is a great blank everywhere now; no more a glamour over sea and sky. But we are nearing the end of the journey. Green Lismore is in sight, and rocky islets crowned by round towers. And soon we glide by the green woods of Dunolly, and threading our way among a fleet of yachts and pleasure-boats we glide into our berth by Oban Pier.

And at Oban we mean to stay for awhile, and enjoy the regular routine of a watering-place. We are just in time to rush to the railway-station, to scramble for the evening papers with all the news from Egypt. And there are letters and telegrams for everybody, and we feel once more in rapport with the world in general. Then I sit on a bench by the esplanade, and listen to the German band, and talk with people about the war. Every other man, by the way, has been through the Soos Canawl, and knows his Egypt as well as his own Land of Cakes.

CURIOSITIES OF TASTE AND SMELL.

TASTE and smell are the two sentinels stationed by nature at the entrance of the digestive canal among the higher animals, for the primary purpose of enabling them to make a judicious selection of food, and to guard against the admission of alimentary matters which would be prejudicial to their health. These senses occupy an intermediate station between that of touch and those of sight and hearing, being more akin to the former than the two latter, which must be regarded as the highest in point of organisation of the five, while touch or common sensation is the simplest.

For a substance to be sapid, or capable of being appreciated by the sense of taste, it is generally necessary that its particles should be soluble in the watery moisture of the tongue and palate; insoluble bodies being tasteless, and the tongue, when perfectly dry, being unable to recognise any flavour in solids which, under ordinary circumstances, might be pungent. Certain things there are, however, which, though insoluble in water and usually tasteless, are perceived to have a strong savour when dissolved in spirits of wine or some other medium.

The function of smell is analogous to this in requiring the fine subdivision of a substance before it can become odorous, generally effected by its volatility, or property of being transformed into gas or vapour more or less gradually, such transformation being the most minute subdivision possible. This is proved by the facts that many odourless bodies become fragrant when caused to give out emanations by means of heat, and that the most powerful scents proceed from those which are most volatile at the ordinary temperature or are already gaseous. When we speak of the odour having "gone off" from anything, as a dead rose having lost its scent, we merely imply that all the volatile matter has evaporated and that only the skeleton, so to speak, remains. As with the sense of taste it is necessary that these particles should be received on a moist membrane for their appreciation, and the most acute perception of them seems to lie in the highest chambers of the nasal cavity, since we inhale the air forcibly into them, instead of allowing it to pass along the lower part, when we wish to obtain delicate or faint perfumes that would otherwise elude our notice. How intensely fine these volatilised particles must be in many cases will be evident to all, without reference to the oft-quoted experiment of a grain of musk powerfully impregnating the atmosphere of a room where the doors and windows were kept constantly open for ten years, without losing an atom of its weight. One would be inclined to imagine that the scientific enthusiast who went the length of carrying out such a practical test must have suffered at times from severe colds in the head, which would seriously disturb the nature of his investigations.

Man, perhaps, possesses the most discriminative power of taste in creation, but he is far inferior to many of the lower mammals in the acuteness of his sense of smell, which is particularly developed among carnivorous animals. It seems to exist in proportion, as might be imagined, to the size of the nasal cavity and consequent extent of surface, covered with olfactory mucous membrane, which is exposed to the air. Indeed, in man this sense is but little used in directing his search for food, as it is with the carnivora, but serves rather to test the purity of the air before it is admitted to the lungs, and warn him of the presence of noxious vapours; for it may be laid down as a broad general rule that everything which gives rise to an

unpleasant smell is hurtful. But even in this function he is again surpassed by other animals, which not only scent their prey from afar, but perceive the approach of danger. The chamois, for example, cannot be brought within gunshot on the windward side. There can be no doubt that in these creatures this sense is exaggerated to a degree of which we can form no conception—exceeding our own, perhaps, by as much as our intellect excels over theirs. It is remarkable that man and the lower animals are rarely affected alike by the same odour—an odour properly so called, for every beast will cough or sneeze at a whiff of ammonia or other irritating gas; this, however, is not true smell, but common sensation—pain, resulting from the application of an irritant to the sensitive membrane, and analogous to that produced by a caustic on the skin. That this is so may be proved by anyone who will hold his hand over a just opened jar or barrel of smelling-salts. Animals as a rule will not eat putrid meat, but they betray no disgust at the effluvium. There are a few cases, however, where their perception seems to coincide with ours; but, curiously enough, these cases seem to be confined to certain animal odours, not the natural scent of the possessors, but those emitted at will—probably as a means of self-defence. Many snakes have this power, our common English ringed-snake being a notable example; a dog or cat may often be seen to run suddenly away in the midst of an attempt to seize one. And man, dog, horse, and buffalo, even an Indian, fly alike from the horrifying secretion ejected by the skunk, for the scent of which there is no parallel on earth—it is an olfactory agony!

The sense of smell is closely allied in some mysterious way with the faculty of taste, though physiologists have not yet discovered the precise channel through which this communication takes place; but anybody may be convinced of the fact by holding the nose and putting some aromatic substance in the mouth, when it will be found to be nearly or absolutely tasteless. It will be impossible to distinguish port from sherry or madeira, under these circumstances, in the dark; and it causes great amusement to make a disbeliever in this fact close his eyes and try to name different things, as they are placed on his tongue. The old woman's plan, at which many scoff, of holding the nose while taking medicine has a good solid basis of reason in it, and the writer has met with an extraordinary

and unexpected adaptation of the practice in the West Indies. In the island of San Domingo—possibly elsewhere, but I have seen it only on Monte Isabella del Toro, above Puerto Plata, and around Samana—there grows a fruit, known there as *matemolo*, or *amargo-dulce*, the latter name literally signifying bitter-sweet. The first impression produced on eating this fruit is one of extreme nauseousness, though decidedly not of a bitter character, but immediately afterwards the flavour becomes very agreeable. Now, the San Domingan black people are not physiologists, but they like *matemolos*; so they have found out that, by closing the nostrils for a moment at each bite, they can enjoy their fruit without the marring accompaniment of the *amargo*, which here simply means unpleasant, the word being often applied to anything disagreeable.

But though delicacy of flavour is lost by exclusion of the sense of smell, many characteristics can still be perceived, such as bitterness, acidity, salinity and, to some extent, sweetness—though probably the last depends on the degree of viscosity of the liquid. These, however, with the pungent savour of peppers, essential oils, and other things, more nearly approach the sense of touch or common sensation than that of the special function, like the action of smelling-salts on the nose. Thus, when we have a severe cold which temporarily obliterates both senses, we can still distinguish beef from mutton, potato from carrot, and tea from chocolate by the sensation which their mere mechanical consistence imparts to the mouth, just as it would to the hand; while the heat of spirits, the thinness and acidity of claret or cider, and the density of beer might enable us to discriminate between them under comparison. A singular case came under my notice some years ago, of a man who, in consequence of inflammation, had entirely lost all power of taste and smell for many years; yet he retained his old likes and dislikes in the matter of different foods with undiminished force. Their various consistency aroused in him, during the act of mastication, the memory of their former flavours and the prejudices or predilections associated with them in his mind; furthermore, he was still an excellent judge of the quality of many provisions, and could tell at once if meat were not fresh, though no savour nor odour could reach him. I should imagine that there could be no hope of restoration of these faculties in his case,

since even such things as vinegar, quinine, and Worcester sauce made very little impression on his palate. Strychnine, arsenic, bark, steel, and other powerful nerve-tonics had been administered for a long time without the slightest success; but he himself had a curious idea that, if anything recurred to him, it would be the perception of some delicate perfume or flavour, such as the scent of a rose or the particular twang of a liqueur. He said he was always "very nearly" perceiving these. Whether his expectations were ever realised I do not know.

Similarly as with odours, it may be stated broadly that all substances which are disagreeable to the palate are harmful to the body in its normal healthy condition, though there are more exceptions in this case than in the other. It is very difficult to induce a wild animal to eat anything poisonous, unless it be hard pressed by hunger, no matter how the bait may be disguised by attractive flavouring. Scientific men are still in dispute as to what parts of the mouth appreciate the different sensations of taste; for the roof of the mouth and soft palate are endowed with this sense as well as the tongue. If the palate be painted with a mild bitter, such as orange marmalade—care being taken that none touches the tongue—it is readily tasted, whereas a powerful bitter, like quinine or chiretta, confined to the same situation is not perceived. A current of cool air directed on the tongue gives rise to the sensation of a saline taste, and the electric current imparts that of acidity. Diamond merchants "taste" precious stones before buying them, and assayers of gold and metalliferous ores submit the specimens to their tongues; but this is obviously on account of that member's superior tactile sensibility only. One of the commonest symptoms of insanity is a depraved appetite, so that an inordinate amount or disgusting substances are eaten with avidity, or food is rejected altogether.

Hunger, which is usually associated with the "mouth watering," and other palatal indications, is really located in the stomach, and can only be appeased by the presence of solid matter there. Some tribes of Indians show their recognition of this fact by swallowing earth when debarred from food; in the Southern States, hunters take with them pills made of calcined oyster-shell, for use in case their provisions become exhausted while crossing the prairies; the trapper of the far West mixes hair (which is wholly incapable of digestion)

with his pemmican on a similar principle, superstitiously insisting that it must be the fur of the very animal, from the flesh of which the compound has been made, to impart its peculiar virtue; Kamschatdales stir up sawdust to give body to their train-oil when they are reduced to live on that exhilarating beverage; and the Cingalese Veddahs mix pounded wood-fibre with honey when they can get nothing else. Thirst, again, really belongs to the stomach, in spite of the dryness of the mouth and throat which calls our attention to it, this being engendered by the lack of due fluid proportion in the contents of the blood-vessels. Both human beings and animals have been seen to drink, till they could drink no longer, without slaking their thirst, when the throat was cut and allowed the fluid to escape. Many animals never drink but absorb sufficient moisture for their tissues from the air or from their food; there is a parrot in the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park which has lived there fifty-two years without a drop of water. Snakes will go a year or more without food or water, apparently suffering no inconvenience, and a beetle has lived three years without either.

The taste and smell of many things are identical, so to speak; so that either sense would immediately recognise them, if they had only been exhibited to the other previously. This is especially the case with violet, rose, orange, lemon, and most vegetable essential oils. If we take one long "sniff" at the musk-plant, we cannot detect any odour in it at all on a second inspiration; and there would seem to be something peculiar about the scent of sweetbriar, since it eludes many people's olfactory nerves altogether. The idiosyncrasies of individuals with regard to these two senses are numberless and entirely inexplicable. Some faint at the perfume of certain flowers, while distaste amounting to utter abhorrence of certain ordinary foods has been known to be hereditary in families. The reflex action of mental association may account for this in some instances, but certainly not in all. Heat favours the acuteness of both senses, and cold blunts it; it being notorious that the delicate flavour and bouquet of choice wines are destroyed by over-icing them.

As we descend lower in the scale of Creation, we find these two faculties manifested in lesser and lesser degrees, till it becomes doubtful whether reptiles, fish, and insects have any true sense of taste or smell, and whether their undoubted nice

discrimination in diet is not effected by the tactual sense alone. Just as creatures which are destitute of the organs of vision—the blind fish in the Kentucky caves for instance—pursue their prey, avoid capture, and perform other functions of life which pertain ordinarily to sight, by exalted common sensibility—even the blinded bats, in Spallanzani's brutal experiment, found their way with unerring precision among the wires—so the forked tongue of a snake and the antennæ or palpi of an insect may aid in the selection of food without ministering to a special sense of taste. It is hard to suppose that a serpent, bolting a bird of three times his own diameter entire, by the most violent and protracted muscular exertion accompanied with actual dislocation of his facial bones, can have any "enjoyment," akin to our own gustatory pleasures, in its meal; nevertheless it will not take a putrid body. Some insects, crustaceans, and molluscs betray certain susceptibilities analogous to the indications of smelling; but no olfactory apparatus has ever been demonstrated in them by microscopic dissection. In whales, and other cetaceous animals, the nostrils are situated in the top of the head, but serve only as blow-holes—the orifices by which the water drawn in at the mouth when feeding is expelled; and in fish proper, the nasal cavity, though elaborate in its internal arrangement, is a cul-de-sac. Indeed, though a certain amount of moisture is necessary for smell, an excess of it destroys the power. Very few fishes have tongues, either, so that their taste cannot be very keen, especially those which live naturally on the infusorial particles in the water, such as gold-fish. Birds, too, are thought to be somewhat deficient in this particular, since their tongues are generally hard and horny, and destitute of nervous papillæ, being adapted more for assistance in the mechanical operation of eating than for appreciating what is eaten. The tongue of a lion and a limpet are not unlike in their structure; the roughness—almost toothed—of the former enables its owner to strip skin from flesh and flesh from bone, while the latter is a little file for rasping down the seaweed on which the limpet feeds, but has no gustatory nerve.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes—acknowledging the remark as a quotation from somebody else, whom I forget—has observed that the phenomenon of involuntary association of ideas is excited more frequently through the sense of smell than

in any other way; and not only more frequently, but with greater persistence. A once familiar odour will at once conjure up scenes, thoughts, and feelings long forgotten (if anything is ever forgotten) far more readily and constantly than any strain of music or other sound, or taste or visible object, or—least of all—impression to the touch. How many dwellers in great cities have been carried back in a moment to cottage hearths and farm-homesteads, to boyish wanderings in forest and on moor, to diamond-latticed windows and sanded floors, to the solemn tick of a great eight-day clock and loving voices of the dead, by a whiff of wood-smoke or fir! And how the aroma of a mango or banana will call up vivid memories of sunny seas and yellow sands fringed with palm-trees! The writer has a curious, though extremely prosaic experience on this point. Having spent seven years of his life on board ocean-going steamers and in sugar-producing countries, he may be safely assumed to be tolerably familiar with the odour of rum. Yet even now, no sooner does the fragrance of that delectable spirit obtrude itself upon him, than a faint, briny, iodinous ghost rises to mingle with its fumes, accompanied by a vague and clammy notion of stickiness and a propensity to choke—the phantom being born of a fearful mixture of seapods steeped in rum, with which, in accordance with some venerable fetich of domestic medicine, his throat was rubbed when he was a little child!

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER II.

Ruin upon ruin, rout on rout.

SPEAKING in time to come of that eventful day ushered in by a dawn so fair and bright—that day of terrible disaster that like a deep and jagged wound took long to heal, and left a cruel scar behind it, even then, the wife of Amos Callender (he whom we have already seen shaving at an upper window) was wont to say, piously returning thanks, that it was "a blessing from above" that her good man had put his razor out of sight before the full and bitter truth was known, else might some rash and daring deed have been wrought by his despairing hand.

Amos Callender was by trade a tanner and, thanks to a long business career of industry and upright dealing, well to do

secure, indeed (or so he thought) of spending the evening of his days in a well-earned repose, sweetened by the possession of well-earned savings.

With heart as full of cheer as the world was just then did Amos sit down that morning to his breakfast, where all was as neat and trim as active hands could make it.

In the window hung a bird in its cage, a mule canary whose little golden throat swelled with a glad some song to greet the golden day. Below this cage was a fuchsia-plant laden with drooping clusters of crimson bells, and trained against a fan-shaped piece of trellis-work, fashioned by Jake their opposite neighbour, in a leisure hour, and thought to be rather a neat thing in its way.

During the early hours of the day Mr. Callender's was the sunny side of the market-place, and the light filtering through the nest of pale green leaves, and crimson bells in the window, fell merrily upon the breakfast-table, also upon Amos himself, in the easy and homely costume of shirt-sleeves and long-flapped waistcoat of grey fustian, seated opposite his smiling wife, and vowing with his mouth full of bread-and-butter, that "a finer mornin', to the best of his experience, never arose upon this sinful world." Amos was punishing the victuals and no mistake; and there upon a handy chair-back hung his coat, all ready to be pulled on ere he set out for the tanyard that lay near the riverside.

"It's a fine thing too," continued the worthy tanner, "to hear that bird there singin' fit to burst his yellow skin, praisin' the Lord, no doubt, 'after his kind,' and doin' of it well too."

Amos made this slight scriptural quotation with a certain complacency, as of one who, possessing a suitable way of putting things, still strives to display a becoming humility of demeanour in spite of gifts. But this smirk of self-satisfaction and conscious merit presently changed by slow degrees to a gaping stare of astonishment as one dissolving view melts into another for first one hurrying figure, then another, each and all gesticulating wildly, began to cross the disc of the window where the bird still sang, and the flowers still blossomed, though the one might well have been silenced and the other blighted by the chill breath of coming disaster.

"Whatever's ado?" said Amos to the good wife whose spoon was held suspended between cup and mouth in a growing bewilderment. "I reckon there's a fire somewhere. Lord send it's not the bank!"

The last words of this fervent aspiration were uttered as Amos made his way along the passage to the street-door, and the next moment the wondering eyes of his spouse were greeted by the sight of him, all hatless and coatless as he was, tearing away down street as if he had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Whatever's ado?" said Mrs. Callender in her turn, hastening to the door and shading her eyes from the sun, the better to survey the rapidly gathering crowd.

"The Bank!" shouted a man as he passed, eager to get to the front, and make himself part and parcel of the general excitement. "It's stopped!"

"Well, if the fire's stopped, what are all the fools gadding for?" said Mrs. Callender, a woman of simple nature, slow to take in facts that lay outside the home that was her world.

"Stopped payment!" bawled a second passer-by, making a speaking-trumpet of his hand the better to convey his news without being obliged to slacken speed.

Mrs. Callender, struck dumb as she afterwards declared, turned slowly round, walked down the narrow passage and into the room where the unfinished breakfast appeared in the light of "funeral baked meats" to her dazed and staring eyes, pinned an old shawl over the canary to stop its singing, flung her apron over her own head, sat down thus shrouded against the window-shutter, and never stirred hand or foot till Amos came in, dropped into a chair, and told her that she saw in him a man who "stood in his shirt."

By his homely expression, however, no reflection was meant to be cast upon the worthy tanner's propriety of demeanour in public, but the simple truth simply stated that the shirt on his back went nigh to represent the entire sum of his earthly possessions.

Mrs. Callender subsequently informed a neighbour that when she pulled the apron off her head, and took a look at Amos, "his face was white as chalk, and like the window-pane on a rainy day wi' sweat." Indeed the good tanner presented a sufficiently ghastly appearance, and his mild and feeling disposition seemed to have undergone some strange and woeful change.

"It's well you put summat on the bird there to stop its singin', lass, or I'd have broke every bar in its cage, and wrung it's neck too, that would I—I couldna' bide to hear it, lass, and such a weight of sorer pressing on my 'art. All as I've toiled for—

all as I've saved to make yo' a well-to-do widdy when time should come for such to be—all as I've laid by a-thinking many and many a time when up to my knees i' hides, 'Our Em'ly shall be well done by yet, and prenticed to a fine business up in York city,' and now it's a' gone—same as a snow-drift i' thaw time. I'm glad the little wench is up-country for an outin', for Lord knows it 'ud go hard wi' me this day to look upon her face!"

Bess, woman-like, thought more of her husband's sorrow than of the cause of it. No doubt it was a terrible thing that the bank should have stopped payment, but for Amos to look so wild and talk about wringing Dicky's neck was worse.

Better to lose all you possessed on earth—better to "stand in your shirt," as the saying had it—than have to stand by and see your husband gomod; and this last crowning calamity was what poor Bess now feared.

Amos, pushing the remains of his breakfast aside with no gentle hand, and having thus cleared a space, laid his arms on the table, laid his head on his arms, and broke out crying like a child.

Then Bess took heart. She stole to his side, and put her arm about his shoulders.

"When a ship's wrecked, Amos," she said, "happen there's here and there a one saved. Things mayn't be as bad as they look, my dear."

Meanwhile outside, crowd and tumult grew.

Dr. Turtle appeared to be gifted with a multiple presence for the occasion. His wide-brimmed hat was set far back on his head; he took endless imaginary pinches of snuff; he even forgot the coronation of our most gracious Sovereign for the time being, not once alluding to it in the many agitated conferences held with the various sections of the populace. If the bank had been a sick man the doctor's opinion of its strange appearance could not have been more ardently sought; and he was all the more able to give the wisest counsel, and express the sagest ideas on the subject, from the fact of his name not being on its books as a depositor and his personal property being safely invested elsewhere.

As one whose feet stand firm on land can best help the drowning, so did Dr. Turtle feel himself thoroughly qualified to counsel and sustain his floundering fellow-townsmen.

An eager group gathered about him, pressing upon him, and one another; eager eyes stared into his; now and again a shaking hand grasped his arm.

"There is something wrong, no doubt," said he sententiously—"something grievously wrong, but doubtless we shall know all about it in time, therefore let us endeavour to keep ourselves as calm as may be. An attitude at once calm and expectant is, I take it, the way in which to meet such an emergency as the present. Such philosophy is however beyond the reach of certain temperaments. Ahem! thank you kindly, let me pass."

A woman, dressed in widow's weeds, and with a frightened child clinging to her black gown, had fainted, and the doctor (never once ceasing to moralize all the while), made his way to her side. Poor soul! she was one who could not attain to the calm and expectant attitude of true philosophy.

Jake, who seemed to be not one but twenty Jakes for the nonce, had his hat off in a trice and began wafting it backwards and forwards before the woman's dead-white face with laudable energy.

"She's took it to 'art awful," said Jake, working away like a winnowing machine, "that's what it is, doctor, and there's three more young 'uns at home too. I know by their boots you see, three soles, one patch; this is the patch I, take it, by the size of him. There sha'n't go no bill along home with them boots, doctor, for I reckon she's lost her little all, as the saying goes, and Heaven help the widow and the fatherless if the neighbours won't put a hand to the job."

Between them the fainting creature was taken to the shelter of a shop and there she waited, the boy always clinging to her, she always clinging to the boy; now and again the two kissed each other.

"You'll come and tell me," said the woman, touching Jake's sleeve with a pale hand on which the wedding-ring hung loosely.

"That I will, never fear," shouted Jake as he precipitated himself into the crowd and was whirled away like a straw.

But when the cruel truth, the truth that was so much more cruel than anyone had thought it could be, came to be known, Jake was terribly troubled at having to fulfil his promise. He pushed his way through the concourse of excited and indignant people with a certain leisureness, as one who goes to a tryst with unwilling feet.

Yes, that was it—robbed.

Whence came the first whisper of the sinister and cruel rumour who might say? It seemed to attain full growth at birth. It was on every tongue, echoed by every voice in the space of one moment.

Becklington Bank had been robbed.

Still with closed windows and barred door it faced the noisy crowd, blankly as a blind man might. No living creature had been seen to pass in or out through the lurking door at the end of the narrow passage, and yet the people cried out that there had been foul play, that this was no ordinary commercial calamity, no stoppage that might be but a temporary trouble and presently yield a dividend, however small.

No; what had come about in their midst, was the committal of a crime, a crime that meant ruin to many a home, a crime by which the widow and the orphan, the lonely and the desolate ones of life should suffer, by which the wages of honest toil and the tiny hoard of the aged and feeble should be wrested from their lawful owners by a hand invisible, impalpable, reaching out from the darkness to clutch and hold.

Denser and denser grew the crowd that beat against the bank as the sea beats against a rock that juts out into its depths.

Curses, cries, groans of impatience and despair filled the sun-bright air.

The narrow passage was blocked by a struggling mass of humanity, each unit in the mass striving to reach the door.

A woman, by dint of that mad strength and despairing energy sometimes shown by the sex in times of great excitement of feeling, had forced herself to the front, and there, raising her arms high above the crush and pressure of those around her, beat upon the door with her open hands, crying out that if they did not let her in she would tear the door down.

So may a bird beat its wings against the bars of an iron cage, alike wild and helpless. More terrible still was a man, strange and foreign-looking, with long black hair and cavernous deep eyes, whom grief seemed to have benumbed and dazed. His face, white and stricken, stood out from the sea of faces about him by reason of its ghastly pallor and fixed intensity of expression. Those about him heard him mutter to himself, saw him strain and tear at the deep collar of his shabby coat, themselves muttering in their turn that surely Gabriel Devenant was mad—that was, madder than usual.

That he was always a little—some people said a good deal—mad, was a generally admitted fact, nor had the circumstance that he occasionally spoke to himself in a foreign tongue been at any time looked upon as reassuring. Sane people, in the opinion of Becklington, were content with

the Queen's English, and very properly so; nor did the fact that Mr. Devenant was only a stranger and pilgrim in the land plead for him aught in this matter. It would have been better, said the wise, had he dropped all foreign nonsense from the first.

But he had not done so, and now the words that fell from his pale-drawn lips were these:

"Ma reine—ma petite reine. Hilda—my little Hilda."

A fond and foolish mingling of tongues it must be confessed.

"Doubtless," said the suave voice of Dr. Turtle at the man's elbow, "this suspense will now shortly terminate—we shall know the worst, or, perhaps, it may be the best of things—we shall be able to rally our moral forces as it were. Meanwhile an attitude of calm—" but here the doctor broke off suddenly in his discourse and stared hard at Gabriel Devenant. "Eh, eh!" he said, touching the man's arm; "Bless me, what's this, Mr. Devenant! I must really beg of you—this condition is positively cataleptic, a most dangerous strain upon the delicately organised vessels of the brain. My very dear sir, rouse yourself, I entreat of you; they cannot keep us in suspense much longer."

"Suspense!" gasped the unhappy object of this adjuration, catching at the words eagerly; "yes, it is that that is so terrible, it is the waiting, and there is Hilda; you know my little Hilda! I have been a poor man as riches go, a poor man as some would say, but it has been enough. I have never grumbled—no one can say that of me. It was enough for her, but now the time is past when I could have made more. I have been a failing man—a failing man this while back. I could not work at the old work now, even if— And there is Hilda, you know—Hilda singing at her work."

The doctor spoke very gently, as tenderly in truth as though this gaunt wild-eyed man were a suffering child.

"Come," he said, "you are not fit for such a scene as this. Let me take you to my house; you shall have some wine, and directly there is any news—"

But with a low strangled cry Gabriel Devenant broke away from the kindly hand that would have led him to a quiet shelter, and, battling wildly with the crowd, as might a swimmer with the waves of a stormy sea, took up a position some distance off, glancing back fearfully ere he settled once more to the old absorbed watching, waiting, and muttering.

"Bless my soul!" said the doctor, and took a prolonged pinch of imaginary snuff.

Becklington Bank was a private financial enterprise, of which two partners, uncle and nephew, were the heads. The manager, old Anthony Geddes, had grown first grey and then pretty nearly bald in their service, and was popularly supposed to be the heart and soul of that outward framework called the House. A man of great resource, probity, energy, and method, he was at the same time humble in his estimation of himself, the whole eye of his mind being taken up with the dignity and splendour of the firm, and the wide-spread confidence felt by the world in general in the house. The books of the bank were in Anthony's eyes as so many Korans in the eyes of the followers of Mahomet. He had a way of slightly bowing his aged head with its long scanty fringe of white locks, when he mentioned the firm, and letting his voice drop, as though he spoke of some sacred thing when he mentioned the house.

At one time Mr. Geddes inhabited rooms in the bank itself; but the junior partner, a man of tender heart and sympathetic nature, thought that the health of the faithful henchman grew feeble, and that that for him to live in a more open part of the town, and combine horticulture in a small way with banking in a large way, would in all probability mend matters.

The deeply-rooted plant was craftily drawn from its bed to be planted in new soil; in other words, Anthony was despatched upon an important and confidential errand to York city, and when he returned found there had been what he called a "flitting" during his absence; the rooms in the bank were given over to a couple of saucy clerks, and Mrs. Geddes, together with all her household treasures, was located in a bonnie cottage-like house in Church Lane—a house with a garden (flowers) in front, and a garden (vegetables) behind. In time, Mr. Geddes got over the surprise of these changes, and developed a pride in French beans and a delight in dahlias. But he never ceased to look upon the two saucy clerks as interlopers, and would cast withering glances at their Lares and Penates, as who would say: "You should have seen these rooms when Mrs. Geddes and I had them!"

Now, among the restless turbulent crowd in the old market-place, a rumour began to creep, and then to fly, that "some one," that ubiquitous personage who sees and hears more than any one else, had caught a

glimpse of Anthony Geddes "fleein' like a hare wi' dogs after 'un," and the boy Davey at his heels—from the cottage in Church Lane towards the bank. Someone had also seen Mrs. Geddes "struck speechless," and standing, a sort of modern Lot's wife, in the centre of one of her choicest flower-beds, whither in her fear and daze she had unwittingly strayed.

It was also reported that Anthony had carried his hat in his hand as though he could not bear its pressure on his head; that his lank locks were "streaming out ahint him;" that the boy Davey (of whom more hereafter) had a face "like a young ghost," and was in a general state of heat and agitation impossible to describe, having evidently been sent from the bank to summon Mr. Geddes on the instant. Davey must, so said the wisacres, have been let out secretly through a certain small arched doorway opening into that dark and narrow alley wherein the ivy-plant had its source, and thence into Church Lane.

At an early hour, then—just, in fact, as Jake came to survey the morning from his doorstep, and just as Amos Callender gave his razor its first dip in the little battered tin can that did duty for a shaving-pot—these two, Anthony Geddes and the boy Davey, were seen hurrying along Church Lane towards the bank.

They were going "sly-like" too, as though they wished to make the greatest possible speed, and at the same time attract the least possible notice.

Doubtless the word "robbery," as the suggested cause of this mysterious state of matters, had been let fall by Mrs. Geddes, that good woman being in a condition so limp, abject and terror-struck, as to fall an easy prey to the designing. That anything should go wrong at the bank appeared to her in the light of a convulsion of nature, for impressions are as catching as measles, and from long companionship with Anthony, his wife had grown to look upon the firm and the house with the same limitless veneration.

True, he had said to her, as he turned to leave the cottage, "Keep a silent tongue, Meg," and there stood the boy Davey, shaking like a leaf, having just delivered himself of a message to the manager from the head clerk.

Meg meant to keep her tongue quiet, of that there can be no doubt, but when her chosen gossip, Mrs. McCann, almost fell into the passage from the impetus conveyed to her massive form by a

hurried entrance through the side-door that led into their mutual garden, the reins of Meg's self-government were loosened, and somehow—she really did not know how—in fact, she said afterwards she felt as though in a “walking swoond”—the word “robbery” dropped from her lips.

From that seed rumour grew, spread, became clamour.

The bank had not suspended payment : the bank had been robbed.

Then, as a thing that is tossed upon the surface of a sea—tossed hither and thither, drifted with this eddy and that—rose the sound of a man's name, Geoffrey Stirling.

He was the younger partner in the firm. His uncle, the senior partner, was just now absent, having gone to London to consult a celebrated oculist as to the state of his sight, which had been failing for some time past.

All the responsibility, all the sorrow of whatever calamity had happened, would fall upon the shoulders of the younger man—a man so universally beloved, held in such high esteem by rich and poor alike, that amid the smart of their own pain many remembered his, and more than one voice in that mad medley of conjecture, was heard to say—that it would come “hard on Maister Geoffrey,” to which another would reply, “Aye, that will it, and him laid on a sick bed, too.”

Those who most dreaded the full knowledge of the loss that was coming, those who most shrank from the black shadow looming ahead, felt that the loss would sting and the shadow chill the heart of the junior partner more for others than for himself.

Alison Stirling, his uncle, was a hard man, stern and just, apt to say of misfortune that was the result of folly, that the victim “deserved all he got;” an excellent man of business, unemotional, self-contained, one who compelled respect rather than won affection, so that, when it became known that his sight was affected, that he began to live in a misty world, seeing all things through a haze, people rather pitied his own consequent suffering than suffered for him; rather condoled with his loss of independence than that the sight of those he loved should be lost to him.

Alison Stirling had never married, and was supposed to care for himself more than for any other thing on earth, unless it were the stainlessness of his career as a financier.

True there were those who held that he had a soft spot in his heart for “Mr.

Geoffrey,” and took a secret yet intense pride in Mr. Geoffrey's young son.

Be these things as they might, the senior partner was looked upon as a hard man, and though some said he would be raging mad at things going wrong in his absence, none said he would be sad or sorry; none said it was “hard upon him,” as they said about his nephew.

Patience has its limits, and, pity who they might, the men who surrounded the building that still stared blankly in their faces were rapidly reaching the limit of theirs.

The crowd began to sway this way and that; someone shouted for a crowbar to force the door from its hinges; men clambered to the window-sills; one thrust his fist through the pane, unheeding the broken glass that gashed his flesh.

The first blow struck is always a dangerous precedent.

In a few moments more not a sheet of glass in the lower windows but was shattered to atoms, and clenched fists beat on the shutters to loosen the bolts that held them.

In vain Dr. Turtle, a sort of self-constituted constable, entreated forbearance from those in his immediate neighbourhood; in vain he managed to climb the horse-block at the door of the Red Lion Inn and thence harangued the multitude; in vain he waved the hand of which he was not a little proud, hoping that men might regard it as a flag of truce. They didn't do anything of the kind.

The reign of anarchy and confusion had set in; passion was in the ascendant; patience and forbearance lay trampled under foot.

A hand, clenching a large stone, appeared above the heads of the crowd.

Another instant and it would have been flung—the precursor of many.

But Gabriel Devenant, still maintaining his place of vantage, still grasping the collar of his coat with working fingers, still paler than his fellows, with his black locks falling back from his lifted face, uttered a cry, stretching his arms suddenly upward—a lead that all eyes followed.

Then the clenched hand and the stone it grasped fell, while a murmur like the buzzing of a countless swarm of bees rose high and sunk to breathless silence.

One of the windows of the upper storey of the bank stood wide open, and there—showing from below like a picture in a frame—stood a man pallid from recent illness, Geoffrey Stirling.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXIX. RIDING HOME.

THE two old gentlemen rode away, each in his own direction, in gloomy silence. Not a word was said by either of them, even to one of his own followers. It was nearly twenty miles to Mr. Harkaway's house, and along the entire twenty miles he rode silent. "He's in an awful passion," said Thoroughbung; "he can't speak from anger." But, to tell the truth, Mr. Harkaway was ashamed of himself. He was an old gentleman, between seventy and eighty, who was supposed to go out for his amusement, and had allowed himself to be betrayed into most unseemly language. What though the hound had not "shown a line?" Was it necessary that he, at his time of life, should fight on the road for the maintenance of a trifling right of sport? But yet there came upon him from time to time a sense of the deep injury done to him. That man, Fairlawn, that blackguard, that creature of all others the furthest removed from a gentleman, had declared that in his, Mr. Harkaway's teeth, he would draw his, Mr. Harkaway's covert! Then he would urge on his old horse, and gnash his teeth; and then, again, he would be ashamed. "Tantœne animis cœlestibus iræ!"

But Thoroughbung rode home high in spirits, very proud, and conscious of having done good work. He was always anxious to stand well with the hunt generally, and was aware that he had now distinguished himself. Harry Annesley was on one side of him, and on the other rode Mr. Florin, the banker. "He's an abominable liar," said Thoroughbung, "a wicked wretched liar!" He was alluding to the Hitcheners's

whip, whom in his wrath he had nearly sent to another world. "He says that one of his hounds got into the covert, but I was there and saw it all. Not a nose was over the little bank which runs between the field and the covert."

"You must have seen a hound if he had been there," said the banker.

"I was as cool as a cucumber, and could count the hounds he had with him. There were three of them. A big black-spotted bitch was leading, the one that I nearly fell upon. When the man went down the hound stopped, not knowing what was expected of him. How should he? The man would have been in the covert, but, by George! I managed to stop him."

"What did you mean to do to him when you rode at him so furiously?" asked Harry.

"Not let him get in there. That was my resolute purpose. I suppose I should have knocked him off his horse with my whip."

"But suppose he had knocked you off your horse?" suggested the banker.

"There is no knowing how that might have been. I never calculated those chances. When a man wants to do a thing like that he generally does it."

"And you did it?" said Harry.

"Yes; I think I did. I dare say his bones are sore. I know mine are. But I don't care for that in the least. When this day comes to be talked about, as I dare say it will be for many a long year, no one will be able to say that the Hitcheners got into that covert." Thoroughbung, with the genuine modesty of an Englishman, would not say that he had achieved by his own prowess all this glory for the Puckeridge Hunt; but he felt it down to the very end of his nails. Had he not been there that whip would have got into the wood, and a

very different tale would then have been told in those coming years to which his mind was running away with happy thoughts. He had ridden the aggressors down; he had stopped the first intrusive hound. But though he continued to talk of the subject, he did not boast in so many words that he had done it. His "veni vidi vici" was confined to his own bosom.

As they rode home together there came to be a little crowd of men round Thoroughbung, giving him the praises that were his due. But one by one they fell off from Annesley's side of the road. He soon felt that no one addressed a word to him. He was, probably, too prone to encourage them in this. It was he that fell away, and courted loneliness, and then in his heart accused them. There was no doubt something of truth in his accusations; but another man less sensitive, might have lived it down. He did more than meet their coldness half way, and then complained to himself of the bitterness of the world. "They are like the beasts of the field," he said, "who when another beast has been wounded, turn upon him and rend him to death." His future brother-in-law, the best-natured fellow that ever was born, rode on thoughtless, and left Harry alone for three or four miles, while he received the pleasant plaudits of his companions. In Joshua's heart was that tale of the whip's discomfiture. He did not see that Molly's brother was alone as soon as he would have done but for his own glory. "He is the same as the others," said Harry to himself. "Because that man has told a falsehood of me, and has had the wit to surround it with circumstances, he thinks it becomes him to ride away and cut me." Then he asked himself some foolish questions as to himself and as to Joshua Thoroughbung, which he did not answer as he should have done, had he remembered that he was then riding Thoroughbung's horse, and that his sister was to become Thoroughbung's wife.

After half an hour of triumphant ovation, Joshua remembered his brother-in-law, and did fall back so as to pick him up. "What's the matter, Harry? Why don't you come on and join us?"

"I'm sick of hearing of that infernal squabble."

"Well; as to a squabble, Mr. Harkaway behaved quite right. If a hunt is to be kept up, the right of entering coverts must be preserved for the hunt they belong to. There was no line shown. You must

remember that there isn't a doubt about that. The hounds were all astray when we joined them. It's a great question whether they brought their fox into that first covert. There are they who think that Bodkin was just riding across the Puckeridge country in search of a fox." Bodkin was Mr. Fairlawn's huntsman. "If you admit that kind of thing, where will you be? As a hunting county just nowhere. Then as a sportsman, where are you? It is necessary to put down such gross fraud. My own impression is that Mr. Fairlawn should be turned out from being master. I own I feel very strongly about it. But then I always have been fond of hunting."

"Just so," said Harry sulkily, who was not in the least interested as to the matter on which Joshua was so eloquent.

Then Mr. Proctor rode by, the gentleman who in the early part of the day had disgusted Harry by calling him "mister." "Now, Mr. Proctor," continued Joshua, "I appeal to you whether Mr. Harkaway was not quite right? If you won't stick up for your rights in a hunting county—" But Mr. Proctor rode on, wishing them good-night, very discourteously declining to hear the remainder of the brewer's arguments. "He's in a hurry, I suppose," said Joshua.

"You'd better follow him. You'll find that he'll listen to you then."

"I don't want him to listen to me particularly."

"I thought you did." Then for half a mile the two men rode on in silence.

"What's the matter with you, Harry?" said Joshua. "I can see there's something up that riles you. I know you're a Fellow of your college, and have other things to think of besides the vagaries of a fox."

"The Fellow of a college!" said Harry, who, had he been in a good humour, would have thought much more of being along with a lot of fox-hunters than of any college honours.

"Well, yes, I suppose it is a great thing to be a Fellow of a college. I never could have been one if I had mugged for ever."

"My being a Fellow of a college won't do me much good. Did you see that old man Proctor go by just now?"

"Oh yes; he never likes to be out after a certain hour."

"And did you see Florin, and Mr. Harkaway, and a lot of others? You yourself have been going on ahead for the last hour without speaking to me."

"How do you mean, without speaking to you?" said Joshua, turning sharp round.

Then Harry Annesley reflected that he was doing an injustice to his future brother-in-law. "Perhaps I have done you wrong," he said.

"You have."

"I beg your pardon. I believe you are as honest and true a fellow as there is in Hertfordshire, but for those others——"

"You think it's about Mountjoy Scarborough, then?" asked Joshua.

"I do. That infernal fool, Peter Prosper, has chosen to publish to the world that he has dropped me because of something that he has heard of that occurrence. A wretched lie has been told with a purpose by Mountjoy Scarborough's brother, and my uncle has taken it into his wise head to believe it. The truth is, I have not been as respectful to him as he thinks I ought, and now he resents my neglect in this fashion. He is going to marry your aunt in order that he may have a lot of children, and cut me out. In order to justify himself, he has told these lies about me, and you see the consequence. Not a man in the county is willing to speak to me."

"I really think a great deal of it's fancy."

"You go and ask Mr. Harkaway. He's honest, and he'll tell you. Ask this new cousin of yours, Mr. Prosper."

"I don't know that they are going to make a match of it, after all."

"Ask my own father. Only think of it;—that a puling puking idiot like that, from a mere freak, should be able to do a man such a mischief! He can rob me of my income, which he himself has brought me up to expect. That he can do by a stroke of his pen. He can threaten to have sons like Priam. All that is within his own bosom. But to justify himself to the world at large, he picks up a scandalous story from a man like Augustus Scarborough, and immediately not a man in the county will speak to me. I say that that is enough to break a man's heart,—not the injury done which a man should bear, but the injustice of the doing. Who wants his beggarly allowance? He can do as he likes about his own money. I shall never ask him for his money. But that he should tell such a lie as this about the county is more than a man can endure."

"What was it that did happen?" asked Joshua.

"The man met me in the street when he was drunk, and he struck at me and was

insolent. Of course I knocked him down. Who wouldn't have done the same? Then his brother found him somewhere, or got hold of him, and sent him out of the country, and says that I had held my tongue when I left him in the street. Of course I held my tongue. What was Mountjoy to me? Then Augustus has asked me sly questions, and accuses me of lying because I did not choose to tell him everything. It all comes out of that."

Here they had reached the rectory, and Harry, after seeing that the horses were properly supplied with gruel, took himself and his ill-humour upstairs to his own chamber. But Joshua had a word or two to say to one of the inmates of the rectory. He felt that it would be improper to ride his horse home without giving time to the animal to drink his gruel, and therefore made his way into the little breakfast-parlour, where Molly had a cup of tea and buttered toast ready for him. He of course told her first of the grand occurrence of the day,—how the two packs of hounds had mixed themselves together, how violently the two masters had fallen out and had nearly flogged each other, how Mr. Harkaway had sworn horribly,—who had never been heard to swear before,—how a final attempt had been made to seize a second covert, and how, at last, it had come to pass that he had distinguished himself. "Do you mean to say that you absolutely rode over the unfortunate man?" asked Molly.

"I did. Not that the man had the worst of it,—or very much the worse. There we were both down, and the two horses, all in a heap together."

"Oh, Joshua, suppose you had been kicked!"

"In that case I should have been—kicked."

"But a kick from an infuriated horse!"

"There wasn't much infuriation about him. The man had ridden all that out of the beast."

"You are sure to laugh at me, Joshua, because I think what terrible things might have happened to you. Why do you go putting yourself so forward in every danger now that you have got somebody else to depend upon you and to care for you? It's very, very wrong."

"Somebody had to do it, Molly. It was most important, in the interests of hunting generally, that those hounds should not have been allowed to get into that covert. I don't think that outsiders ever understand how essential it is to maintain you

rights. It isn't as though it were an individual. The whole county may depend upon it."

"Why shouldn't it be some man who hasn't got a young woman to look after?" said Molly, half laughing and half crying.

"It's the man who first gets there who ought to do it," said Joshua. "A man can't stop to remember whether he has got a young woman or not."

"I don't think you ever want to remember." Then that little quarrel was brought to the usual end with the usual blandishments, and Joshua went on to discuss with her that other source of trouble, her brother's fall. "Harry is awfully cut up," said the brewer.

"You mean these affairs about his uncle?"

"Yes. It isn't only the money he feels, or the property, but people look askew at him. You ought all of you to be very kind to him."

"I am sure we are."

"There is something in it to vex him. That stupid old fool, your uncle——; I beg your pardon, you know, for speaking of him in that way."

"He is a stupid old fool."

"Is behaving very badly. I don't know whether he shouldn't be treated as I did that fellow up at the covert."

"Ride over him?"

"Something of that kind. Of course Harry is sore about it, and when a man is sore he frets at a thing like that more than he ought to do. As for that aunt of mine at Buntingford, there seems to be some hitch in it. I should have said she'd have married The Old Gentleman had he asked her."

"Don't talk like that, Joshua."

"But there is some screw loose. Simpson came up to my father about it yesterday, and the governor let enough of the cat out of the bag to make me know that the thing is not going as straight as she wishes."

"He has offered then?"

"I am sure he has asked her."

"And your aunt will accept him?" asked Molly.

"There's probably some difference about money. It's all done with the intention of injuring poor Harry. If he were my own brother I could not be more unhappy about him. And as to Aunt Matilda, she's a fool. They are two fools together. If they choose to marry we can't hinder them. But there is some screw loose, and if the two young lovers don't know their own mind

things may come right at last." Then, with some further blandishments, the prosperous brewer walked away.

TWICE ACROSS THE CHANNEL WHEN CHARLES WAS KING.

SECONDLY—TO JERSEY AND GUERNSEY.

IN beginning his account of his second Channel trip Heylyn says: "My Survey of the Estate of the two Islands of Guernzey and Jarsey is fashioned after a more serious and solemn manner. I had then began to apply myself to the Lord Bishop of London, and was resolved to present the work to him when it was once finished, and, therefore, was to frame my style agreeably unto the gravity and composedness of so great a Prelate."

Again: "At Court . . . at the time I had finished these Relations," meaning his "lively" account of his French holiday, "the French party there were as considerable for their number as it was afterwards for their power," necessitating that a Discourse should trip along to a step that would please the party; but now, as the object was to address a powerful prelate, a "discourse fashioned with so much liberty, and touching (as it might be thought) with so much Gayete de coeur upon the humours of that"—the French—"people, might have procured me no good welcome." From which it followed that, "The indiscretion would have been unpardonable if I had come before such a person in so light a garb as might have given him a just occasion to suppose that I had too much of the Antick, and might be rather serviceable to his recreations than to be honoured with employments of more weight and consequence."

Now that the change in style that will be perceived is thus well accounted for, we may accompany Heylyn in his survey of the Islands of Guernzey and Jarsey.

It is remembered that Lord Danvers (to be Earl of Danby) spoke commendatorily of Peter Heylyn to Prince Charles in 1623. Five years afterwards, the good opinion that brought out the commendation bore fruit of another kind. The earl was Governor of Jersey. Heylyn, immediately after his Normandy Relations, had written some theological Latin pamphlets that Prideaux, King's Professor of Divinity, and Reynolds, Warden of Merton, denounced, preaching of his Bellarminianism, his Pontificianism, his heresies of all sorts that had led to the narrow party proclaiming him a Papist in the Public Divinity School; and as

this happened just before Heylyn had resolved to show the Bishop of London (Laud) that he was not an antick, it was at a moment when, if patrons were going to do anything for him, their opportunity was come, since he was absolutely without any preferment whatever, and if a post could be proposed or procured for him, he was ready at once to make himself and the post fit. At this juncture, "On provocation Given unto the French at the Isle of Rhe," in Heylyn's own words, "the king received advertisement of some reciprocal affront intended by the French on the Isles of Jarsey and Guernzey with others thereupon appendant," such isles being "the only remainders of the Dukedom of Normandy in the power of the English." As a result of the "advertisement," "it was thought good to send the Earl of Danby with a considerable supply of Men and Armes, and Ammunition to make good those Islands by fortifying and assuring them against all invasions." "And this order being signified to his Lordship about the beginning of December, anno 1628, he cheerfully embraced the service, and prepared accordingly. But," which is the spot at which Heylyn's history gets intertwined with the governor's, and the islands', and the life of England herself—the earl "being deserted by his own Chaplaines in regard of the extremity of the season, and the visible danger of the Enterprize, he proposed the businesse of that attendance unto me (not otherwise relating to him than as to an honourable friend)," and in "me he found as great a readiness and resolution as he found coldnesse in the other."

Towards the end of February Heylyn set out from town, where he had had to stay over Christmas, to wait for his patron down in Hampshire, near the port of embarkation. The rendezvous was "at the house of Mr. Arthur Brumfield, in the Parish of Tichfield near the sea, situate between Portsmouth and Southampton;" and there Heylyn and all were entertained handsomely for a week, with even then the need "to tarry" two or three days longer for the arrival of some missing men and ammunition. The result was that it was a Tuesday, the 3rd of March (the year being 1628), when the Assurance, "a ship of eight hundred tun, furnished with forty-two pieces of Ordinance," with "four hundred foot, under Colonel Piper-nell, Lieut. Colonel Francis Connisby, Lieut. Colonel Francis Rainford, and Captain William Killegra," the ship being "very

well manned with valiant and expert sailors," was pronounced to be ready to sail, and received the governor and his staff on board. Ready also was a "Fleet," under Admiral Sir Henry Palmer, "of two Pinnaces called the Whelps, a Catch called the Minnikin, and a Merchants ship called the Charles;" and the five sail set off at once, when "the sea was very calme and quiet," producing "a sickly and unpleasant movement," and when, after acquaintance had been made with "the Needles, a dangerous passage at all times, . . . we were fain to lie at Hull (as the Mariners phrase it) all that night." Excitement was not many knots off, however. The watch "descried a sail of French," near by, at daylight. It consisted "of ten barks laden with very good Gascoygne wines and good choyce of Linen;" and "our two Whelps and the Catch gave chase unto them." The pursuit was hot, and the chances of the game were seized with excellent advantage. "Never," says Heylyn, "did Duck by frequent diving so escape the Spaniell, or did Hare by often turning so avoid the Hounds," as did these French skippers slip from the Englishmen, and slip, and slip again. Finally there was no capture. The Whelps and the spaniels, the ducks, and hares, and hounds, all seem to have moored close together finally, in peace and good temper (when it was that the very goodness of the wine, and the nice assortment of linen, had acceptable demonstration, possibly); for Heylyn makes known that, in the "Ilands," "by an antient privilege of the Kings of England, . . . lawfull it is both for French men or for others, how hot soever the war be followed in other parts, to repair hither without danger, and here to trade in all security;" and most likely the diving and the turning were done till the "hither" was gained.

"Jarsey, Guernzey, and the Isles Appendant," being now able to be surveyed, and get a "Discourse," or "Relations," the business—after the serious and solemn manner suitable to the gravity and composedness of Laud—began by going "on shoar in the Bay of St. Heliers," on the Friday. Heylyn took a little rest after landing; for "you need not think but that sleep and a good Bed were welcome to us, after so long and ill a passage;" but the next morning the note-book was in hand, and something was dotted down about Alderney. "A great quantity of this little Island is overlaid

with sand, driven thither by the fury of the North-west winde; . . . the soil is indifferently rich both for husbandry and grasing;” still, “the aire is healthy, though sometimes thickened with the vapours arising from the sea;” and “a Town it hath of well-near an hundred families.”* Sark—the fee-farm of which belonged to the De Cartereta, as the fee-farm of Alderney had been given to the Chamberlains—is “an isle not known at all by any name among the Antients, and no marvail, for till the fifth of Queene Elizabeth or thereabouts it was not peopled.” After that, “it contained only a poor hermitage, together with a little Chappell,” whereas “to-day”—only a quarter of a century after Elizabeth’s reign was over—“it may contain some forty households.” “Guernzey, or Guernzey,” possessed a feature that at once gained for it Heylyn’s favour. It had “a Lake . . . near unto the sea, of about a mile or more in compasse, exceeding well stored with Carpes, the best that ever mortall eye beheld for tast and bignesse.” The triangular shape of the island was noted also: “Each side about nine miles.” It was observed to have a splendid harbour and castle, some witches, twenty thousand inhabitants, two thousand of them able men, only “but poorly weaponed.” It was observed to be divided into ten parishes; due note was made that St. Peter’s, one of them, has “a fair and safe peer adjoining to it for the benefit of their merchants, being honoured also with a Market and the Plaidery, or Court of Justice;” and it was discovered that the “principall commodity” which the people “use to send abroad are the works and labours of the poorer sort, as Wast-cotes, Stockins, and other manufactures made of Wool, wherein they are exceeding cunning.” The Guernsey people were exceeding sociable and generous also, wherein they differed agreeably from the Jersey people, who were, “by reason of their continual toyle and labour, not a little affected to a kinde of melancholy surlinesse incident to ploughmen.” “In all Guernzey I did not see one beggar” is Heylyn’s report; but in Jersey “the children are continually craving almes of every stranger.” Jersey took the lead of Guernsey, however, in the matter of field-walls. These,

at Guernsey, are stones, which, says Heylyn, may be good defence—defence being the Earl of Danby’s mission, there must be remembrance, and his lordship’s chaplain being quite sure to hear the matter diligently canvassed. But, at Jersey, land was found divided by “Ditches and Banks of earth cast up, well fenced, and planted with several sorts of apples, out of which they make a pleasing kind of Sider, which is their ordinary drink.” Out of which, taking the apples for a leading item, it is easy to make a pleasing kind of view of Jersey as it was when Heylyn saw it. “The Countrey,” he says, is “exceeding pleasant and delightsome;” it is “generally swelling up in pretty hillocks, under which lie pleasant Vallies, and those plentifully watered with dainty Rills or Riverets.” The air is “very healthy and little disposed unto diseases, unlesse it be unto a kinde of Ague in the end of Harvest, which they call Les Settembers.” The island, in “the figure of it, will hold proportion with that long kind of square which the Geometricians call Oblongum.” And it has, to enjoy all this, “thirty thousand living soules.”

A fine and bold feature in Heylyn’s landscape comes also from this: “On an high and craggy rock is a most strong Castle called by an haughty name, Mount Orgueil.” Jersey’s drawback, though, is that “the countrey is yet so small in the extent and circuit . . . it is . . . an abridgment only of the greater works of nature.” And not only Heylyn, but the governor, his master, discovered a great and peculiar difficulty in this: “My Lord of Danby,” it is written down, “seemed to wonder how such a span of earth could contain such multitudes of people.”

“When first I undertook to attend upon my Lord of Danby to the Ilands of Guernzey and Jarsey,” was an introductory declaration of Heylyn’s, as he was entering into a branch of his Discourse certain to be of the closest interest to Bishop Laud, “besides the purpose which I had of doing service to his Lordship, I resolved also to do somewhat for myself, and if possible somewhat unto the places.” It was comprehensive; it was candid. Actuated by it, “I applyed my self,” continues Heylyn, “to make enquire after their form of Government, in which, I must needs confesse, I met with much which did exceedingly affect me. . . . The grand customarie of Normandy is of most credit with them, and that

* According to L’Annuaire Hamonet (1880), a Guide, in French, for the French living under English rule, its population now is two thousand four hundred and fifty, exclusive of the garrison. Sark possesses five hundred and fifty inhabitants.

indeed the only rule by which they are directed; save that in some few passages it hath been altered by our Prince, for the conveniency of this people." There follow many instances of the prevailing "customarie," of course. It was carried on by governors, bailiffs, ministers, justices; lists are given of all who had held office since 1301, in which lists there occur names so well known as L'Emprière, Brasdefer, De Carteret, Pawlet, Herault, De Sausmarez, De Longueville; some of the measurements are noted (for example, "an acre of their measure is fortie Perches long and one in breadth, every Perche being twenty-one foot"); and such tithes as "French Querrui" and "Champart" get thorough definition. Querrui, "the taking of the eight and nine sheafe," is, says Heylyn, "as I conceive from the French word Charrue, which signifieth a Plough;" it means "as much as Plough-right, alluding to the custom of some Lords in France, who used to give their Husbandmen or Villains, as a guerdon for their toyle, the eight and nine of their increase." Champart is "the part reserved for the Lord unto himself;" double Champart, or the Champart du Roy, being the part belonging to the king; and it is obtained by "the Farmer, in his counting of his sheaves, casting aside the ten"—which is the Champart du Roy—"for the King, and the twelve, which is the Champart, for the Lord."

"Widowes," Heylyn found, "which are mindful to re-marry, shall not be permitted to contract themselves untill six moneths after the decease of their dead husbands;" when even then they "shall owe so much respect unto their Parents as not to marry again without their leave." Children were not to be baptised by "such names as were used in the time of Paganism;" not meaning, says Heylyn, "such names as occur in Poets, as Hector, Hercules, etc."—since—"names of this sort occurre frequently in S. Pauls Epistles;" but meaning the "names of Idols—the names of office, as Angell, Baptist, Apostle"—the names that "formerly have been in use amongst our ancestors as Richard, Edmund, William, and the like." * Burials were to be conducted with

neither "a Sermon, nor Prayers, nor sound of Bell, nor any other ceremony whatsoever." Deacons were to "take order that the poor may be relieved without begging . . . and that young men fit for labour be set unto some occupation." Churches, "being dedicated to God's service," were to be kept for God's service; never were "Civill Courts to be there holden;" yet there were "multitudes of lawyers" in Jersey. "This people conceiving rightly that multitudes of Lawyers occasion multitudes of businesse, that, according to that merry saying of old Haywood, 'The more spaniels in the field, the more game';"—and where, if only St. Peters, at Guernsey, were "honoured" by a Plaidery or Court of Justice, were the most of the Channel lawyers to meet, to enjoy their law! Persons intending "to be communicants were to abjure the Pope, the Masse, and all Superstition and Idolatry," though they might not yet "be administered unto when they were walking," as the Synodists of the Netherlands permitted, making Heylyn cry out: "A stiff and stubborn generation, and stiffer in the hams then any Elephant! I had before heard sometimes of ambling Communion, but till I met with that Epitome, I could not stumble on the meaning." At churches, "The People being assembled before Sermon, there shall be read a Chapter out of the Canonick books of Scripture only, and not of the Apocrypha, and it shall be read by one . . . of honest conversation." In the churches, Heylyn looked round, and found them "naked of all Monuments, with not so much as the blazon of an Armes permitted in a window, for fear, as I conjecture, of Idolatry;" and, of course, the sum of the whole meant what came afterwards to be called Puritanism, and what was abhorrent to Heylyn's very soul.

"We desire also that prophane glasse windows whose superstitious paint makes many Idolators, may be humbled and dashed in pieces against the ground, for our conscience tels us that they are Diabolically, and the father of Darknesse was the in-venter of them, being the chiefe Patrone to damnable pride. . . .

"We desire also that Bishops may have no more foure corner caps, but let them be tryangle, to put them in mind, if they affect not reformation, Tyburne will be their portion. . . .

"We desire . . . that surplises may not be suffered, for why? the Clergie be growne so proud of late that forsooth they

* This seems incredible. But Heylyn, to support his assertion, relates how "our great contriver Snape," even here in England, refused to baptise the child of "one Hodkinson of Northampton" by the name of Richard. He demanded another name in the place of it, as he stood resolutely at the font; and on the godfather, with equal resolution, refusing, Snape "forsook the place, and the childe was carried back unchristened."

must have them starched, to the great prejudice of the lilly-white hands of good-customed Landresses, which upon Sabbath dayes are covered with neither lincie, nor woolcie, but well-glossed satin gownes.

"We desire. . . ."

Much else; this being part of the impetuous petition of "above twelve thousand of the Weamen of Middlesex," which, "that Males may not seeme to be more religious then Females," they would have "bin bold to present unto you all," only that friends advised them to hold it back, "untill it should please God to endue them with more wit and lesse Non-sence." And it comes in well here, because it is an embodiment of the spirit which Heylyn saw abroad in the Channel Islands, and which struck him with so much dismay. It was not new in those places either. In the previous reign, when "two Companies of Souldiers were distributed" over "Guernzey," Heylyn was told, "such was the peevish obstinacy of one of the Ministers" of that island, that though at last "on much entreaty," he allowed the soldiers' minister "to read prayers unto them in his Church, at such times when himself and people did not use it," it was with "expresse condition that he should not either read the Litany or administer the Communion;" and, these "Companies of Souldiers" being still in residence in 1628 (James's reign only just three years before ended), Heylyn saw for himself that "as often as they purpose to receive the Sacrament, they have been compelled to ferry over to the Castle" . . . at Jersey . . . "and in the great hall there, celebrate the holy Supper." Further: This anticipatory Puritanism was not new in the islands, even then. The Whole Body of the Discipline, from which Heylyn quotes, was revived in a "Forme" dated October, 1597, from a Forme that had been drawn up in a synod held in Guernsey in 1576; and this had been preceded by what Heylyn styles an "improvident assent," opening a pernicious "gap unto the Brethren," granted on the seventh of August, 1565, by Elizabeth. It was a queenly document, too, judging by its queenly terms. It says: "The Queen's most excellent Majesty understandeth that the Isles of Garnzey and Jarsey . . . have a minister which ever since his arrivall in Jarsey hath used the like order of Preaching and Administration as . . . is used in the French Church in London." Now, "her Highness is well pleased to admit the same

order of Preaching and Administration to be continued at St. Heliers Provided always that the residue of the Parishes in the said Isle shall diligently put apart all superstitions used in the said Diocese." And when the license ends "And so, Fare you well, From Richmond," being subscribed "N. Bacon, Will Northampton, R. Leicester, Gal. Clynton, R. Rogers, F. Knols, William Cecil," it shows itself a license beautifully calm, for the hot time in which it was issued, and it brings real admiration. Peter Heylyn, however, was in the midst of the fight, having no power there to breathe freely. He was full of the bold and audacious spirit, as Anthony à Wood calls it, which made him selected by-and-by, by Laud, to collect "the scandalous points out of Prynne's books;" which made him offend Prideaux again, so that he once more spoke publicly against him with so much malignity "it fetcht a great hum from the Country Ministers present." He was full of the spirit that made him offend Hakewill, who said of him: "The condition of the man is such that what he saith does not matter, as his word hardly passeth either for commendation or slander," so "conceited and pragmaticall" was he, so "bold and undaunted." He was full of that spirit which made him offend his own parishioners at Alresford, by removing the communion-table from the middle of the church to the east end; which made him follow the king to Oxford, and edit, in turns with Birkenhead, the *Mercurius Aulicus*; which made him voted a delinquent in the House of Commons, and resulted in the sequestration of his goods, with his "incomparable Library," and all that he possessed; and it followed that to him, when he was making his "survey" of Guernzey and Jarsey, the particular departure that he saw there from his own particular orthodoxy did not seem deserving of the toleration it had obtained, that it was a pain to find it so well established and ratified, and that he conveyed the news of it to Laud, aroused and astounded.

To get out of it, to get home, was his best enjoyment, at the time. He had to conform somewhat, theologically, with what he found at Jersey to conform with. Thus, he had to preach in the "naked" church where the brethren, who had had the "gap" opened for them, read straightly from the "Canonicall Books;" but he ordered them to have very early service, so that he might have his at nine o'clock; and he then used the Liturgy "according to the

Prescript form of the Church of England." Also, he had to conform to the time and tide that he found ruling it at Jersey, "the crossness of the winds and the roughness of the water" having "detained us some days longer in Castle Cornet than we had intended;" but even this yielded at last, and "on Maunday Thursday, anno 1629, we went aboard our ships, and hoisted sail for England." Arrived at home, "I testify before the Altar," cries Heylyn, "the grateful acknowledgment of a safe voyage and a prosperous return, blessings which I never merited;" and some of his joy breaks out in this fashion:

Hail, thou sweet England! may I breathe my last
In thy lov'd armes, and when my dayes are past,
And to the silence of the grave I must,
All I desire is thou wouldst keep my dust.

So England did. He was buried in Westminster, in 1662, after the king had been executed; after Laud had been executed; after he had himself wandered about a fugitive; after he had been rewarded for the gravity of his Jersey survey by an appointment as King's Chaplain; after he had been made Prebend of Westminster, and Rector of Henningford, and Vicar of Houghton-le-Spring, and all his glory, and all his quarrelsomeness, and all his despair had died out, and he was only a simple old divine, toiling on at his daily task, white-headed and blind. In his day he had written tragedies, comedies, histories, essays, discourses, answers, narrations, relations, views, letters, sermons, pamphlets, catechisms, observations, justifications, declarations, tracts; he had translated other men's works by the score; and then there comes this little note of him in Evelyn's Diary, March 29th, 1661: "Dr. Heylyn (author of the Geography) preach'd at the Abbey concerning Friendship and Charitie. He was, I think, at this time, quite darke, and so had been for some yeares." It was the happy and, as Royalists thought, permanent Restoration time; and no more touching moment can be chosen for taking a last look at Peter Heylyn than when, the year before his death, he was glorying in the return of the son of his king, and was standing there in Westminster Abbey to do it, with his sightless eyes.

ON MATRIMONY AND MATCH-MAKING.

It is recorded of an ancient sage that, on being asked at what period of his life a man ought to marry, he replied: "When he is young, it is too soon; when old, it is

too late." Discouraging as such an answer may be considered, it still leaves the question open as far as middle-aged individuals are concerned; whereas the matrimonial aspirations of these, as well as of juvenile and "hors d'âge" would-be Benedicks are summarily and uncompromisingly checked by the oft-quoted prohibitory monosyllable, "Don't!" That marriage is a lottery more suggestive of blanks than prizes is, we believe, generally allowed; and the possibility of this drawback being admitted, it would be unreasonable to blame the candidate for the happy state if he looks before he leaps, and weighs well the pros and cons of the undertaking ere he irrecoverably commits himself. Everyone is not so fortunate in his choice as the painter Charlet, who tells us that on his first interview with the damsel destined to become his wife, he found her engaged in the homely but practical employment of darning stockings. "Mine are always in holes," he reflected, and this reminiscence of bachelor discomfort decided the matter; he proposed, was accepted, and, as he conscientiously adds, "never had cause to regret it."

The uncertainty, indeed, attending the process of selection is sufficient of itself to deter many from embarking on so hazardous a venture, and the visions of connubial bliss, in which most people have at some period or other indulged, are apt to lose much of their brightness as the moment draws near for realising them. It is, moreover, a melancholy fact that young men of the present day are less impulsive and more calculating than—if traditional reports are to be credited—they formerly were, and are rarely inclined to barter their liberty except for a proportionate "quid pro quo." Love in a cottage has long been an exploded myth, and the pleasant fallacy, that where one can dine two can, only requires a few months' trial to be at once and for ever disproved. We are gradually—although not perhaps without protest—adopting the usage in vogue among our neighbours across the Channel, and accustoming ourselves to regard matrimony as an "affair" not to be entered upon lightly, but demanding the fullest and most mature deliberation; like Talleyrand, we are inclined to distrust first impressions, although not precisely for the reason alleged by that astute diplomatist. Many young men who willingly succumb to the attraction of a pretty face, and plunge unhesitatingly into a flirtation on every avail-

able opportunity, yet, however closely they may flutter round the candle, take especial care not to burn their wings; while on their side the fair ladies, we may be sure, are equally cautious as to the amount of encouragement they may safely venture to bestow. For it would be doing them injustice to suppose for a moment that they are a whit less well-informed respecting the social status and financial position of their admirers than are the latter with regard to theirs; and even were a girl—such things will occasionally happen—to accord more than a stray dance to some handsome but penniless “detrimental,” on the plea of his being the best waltzer in the room, is not her chaperon there to whisper a timely word of warning, and keep a sharp look-out on the offender?

This being the actual state of things—and that it is so, few, we imagine, will be disposed to deny—would it be so very surprising if there were no marriages at all? Such a deplorable contingency might possibly arrive, if the parties concerned were left to their own devices, and entirely dependent on their inclination or ability to bring matters to a satisfactory issue; but at this critical juncture the tutelary priestess of Hymen, in other words the match-maker, steps in, and smooths the way to a conclusive settlement of the difficulty. When we read in the *Morning Post* or *Court Journal* that a marriage has been arranged between Lord Fitz-Ararat and Miss Pamela Geldwechsel, only daughter and heiress of Ezra Geldwechsel Esquire, of Lothbury and Mayfair, we may be morally certain that some match-making duenna has had a finger in the pie; and by her persuasive reasoning has induced the notoriously impecunious patrician to regard with a favourable eye the somewhat shadily-acquired dowry of his affianced bride. Without her aid, he would in all human probability have continued to vegetate on an income barely sufficient for his “button-holes” and cigarettes; while Miss Pamela, notwithstanding her half-million, would in equal likelihood have for ever remained outside that social pale, beyond which for an unaccredited parvenu there is no passing. We may therefore fairly assume that, as society is at present constituted, such promoters of matrimony are not only useful but indispensable; and in proof of the assertion may be excused for examining how successfully a similar system, carried on, it is true, far more extensively

and methodically than with us, is acknowledged to work in France.

There, a girl who remains single up to the age of five-and-twenty may be looked upon almost as an anomaly; even the least attractive regarding their establishment in life not merely as a probable eventuality, but as a matter of course. When scarcely in her teens, her future prospects have been already discussed, and her “expectancies” accurately calculated by that mysterious but influential Vehmgericht, the family council; suggestions from its different members as to the corresponding advantages she is entitled to demand have been carefully listened to and considered, and the names of such of their friends and acquaintance as may ultimately supply the requisite son-in-law duly registered. When the time for action arrives, negotiations are opened on all sides, not only by the mother and other female relatives, but also by whatever sympathising “commère”—and they are legion—they can contrive to enlist in their behalf; and thanks to their united efforts the young lady, whose consent to this arbitrary disposal of her person is regarded as a foregone conclusion, finds herself in an incredibly short space of time betrothed to a comparative stranger, whom she has perhaps met twice in her life before, and complacently accepting as her legitimate due the traditional bouquet which, during the dreary interval between the signature of the contract and the marriage ceremony, it is his daily privilege to offer her. When once the knot is tied, and the newly-linked couple are fairly despatched on their wedding tour, the professional match-maker's occupation is for the nonce at an end, and she calmly washes her hands as to the result of the “arrangement.” Yet, strange though it may seem, such marriages usually turn out remarkably well; and even in cases where a complete accordance of tastes and dispositions is wanting, both parties are, as a rule, disposed to make the best of an indifferent bargain, and, however cordially they may disagree at home, take especial care that the world knows nothing about it.

With us, the process of match-making is somewhat different, inasmuch as the damsel herself has a voice—and a very decisive one—in the matter. The days are gone by, if they ever existed, when daughters were dragged to the altar, and compelled to sacrifice their inclinations to family interests or parental authority. In these enlightened

times every one of them knows that she is at liberty to choose her own husband, and, it is but doing her justice to add, is perfectly equal to the occasion. She may, and often does, give her hand where her heart is not, and thus swells the list of ill-assorted alliances which too frequently terminate in the divorce court; but whether this step be motivated by cupidity or ambition, she takes it of her own free will, and, whatever may be the result, has nobody to blame for it but herself. Being thoroughly versed in all the intricate mysteries of those popular manuals, the Peerage, Baronetage, and County Families, and consequently forearmed against the possibility of confounding the wrong Simon Pure with the right one, she enters on her campaign with the two-fold advantage of knowing exactly what she wants, and of being determined not to rest until she has got it. There are drawbacks in the way, of course: rival beauties to encounter and vanquish, and inopportune flirtations to resist; she must constantly keep her eye on the main chance, and remorselessly throw over young Sabretasche of the Blues, who waltzes like a Viennese, but has nothing save debts and his pay, in favour of the stiff and ungainly Lord Hillendale, who has not two ideas in his head, but is incomparably the best match in the room.

When the desired impression is made, and the victim is fairly in the toils, what is her next move? Simply to secure him an invitation to the country-house of one of her intimates, where she herself will be a fixture during the autumn; and where, with the judicious co-operation of the châtelaine, who is always ready to aid and abet on such occasions, she may reasonably hope to bring him to book. For it is an undoubted fact that more marriages are "arranged" in these favoured latitudes than anywhere else; the opportunities offered of throwing people together are endless, and she must be indeed a novice who neglects to profit by them. Five o'clock tea, lawn-tennis, and private theatricals, not to mention the seductive dawdlings in the conservatory and lunches in the shooting-field, enable her to display every separate attraction of feminine coquetry to the fullest advantage; and it requires more stoicism than usually falls to the lot of a bachelor to pass unscathed through the ordeal. Even here, however, all is not plain sailing; it sometimes happens that the gay Lothario, gifted with more acuteness of perception than the generality of

his fellows, sees through the manoeuvre, and maliciously turns the tables on the fair intriguer by flirting outrageously with her as long as the pastime amuses him, and then by being summoned away at the critical moment by a convenient telegram, leaving the inconsolable Calypso to mourn his inconstancy, and ruminate on Jacob Faithful's maxim, "Better luck next time!"

Such examples of countermining, it must be owned, are rare; in nine cases out of ten the success of the plan depends on the young lady herself; and it is not too much to say that so delicate an operation could scarcely be entrusted to more competent hands.

Match-making, as a profession, is far more extensively cultivated in Paris than with us; we have, to our knowledge at least, no M. de Foy or Madame St. Marc (the mother, by the way, of a once charming actress of the Vaudeville Theatre) to expatiate by means of eloquent advertisements on the manifold advantages of the happy state, and to encourage timid aspirants by an assurance of inviolable secrecy and discretion. With the single exception of that philanthropic journal, *The Matrimonial News*, this important question, as regards publicity, appears to us to have been unaccountably neglected and left entirely to the mercy of amateurs, who, it is to be feared, acquit themselves of their task with more zeal than ability. Taking into consideration the culpable indifference manifested by a large portion of the youthful community on the subject of matrimony, would it not be well by way of tacit reproach to stimulate their lukewarmness by an occasional reference to those whose experience of connubial bliss has by their own confession been a satisfactory one; and where can we find a more appropriate example than in the person of the late estimable M. Curmer?

When this eminent publisher brought out in 1838 his magnificent edition of Paul and Virginia, unquestionably one of the most beautiful works produced in France during the present century, his conjugal affection prompted him to associate with this masterpiece of typography and illustration the name of his wife, by causing her portrait in profile to be engraved at the foot of the concluding sentence of "The Indian Cottage," "*on n'est heureux qu'avec une bonne femme.*" One hundred impressions of the book having been issued as an essay, this touching memorial of attachment was at once spotted and

mercilessly ridiculed by the critics; and so unanimous was the verdict that the mortified husband, much against his will, decided on cancelling the engraving, copies containing which, we may add for the benefit of collectors, are naturally of the greatest rarity.

To our mind this tribute to the virtues of an excellent lady merited a better fate; in our capacity of staunch advocate for matrimony we sympathise profoundly with the worthy M. Curmer, and believe as implicitly in the domestic elysium of his married life as in the long-enduring felicity of Baucis and Philemon. Nevertheless, as it behoves a conscientious chronicler to respect other people's opinions, and to treat impartially both sides of the question, we consider ourselves bound to record the following dialogue between a young couple inhabiting for the time being a cottage situated somewhere in the Welsh mountains during the last week of the honeymoon. We do not deem it necessary to state how the conversation came to our knowledge, but can safely guarantee its authenticity.

"How very dull you are this evening," observed the lady, rather more snappishly perhaps than is usual under the peculiar circumstances of her position; "you do nothing but yawn!"

"My dear," coolly replied the gentleman, "I believe it is generally accorded that man and wife are one; and, whether from constitutional infirmity or instinctive boredom I cannot take upon myself to say, I invariably yawn when I am alone!"

VIGNETTE.

THE long waves wash the strand, the fog lies low,
A moaning wind soft croons along the coast,
And, white and gleaming like a new-made ghost,
The sea-gull flaps along, heavy and slow,
Then fades in the grey mist. Aye to and fro
The scented seaweed, twined around yon post,
Floats, falls, then rises, until we almost
Deem that a mermaid calls on us to go
And join her court. The earth, the sea, the sky,
Are one drear tint; then round me as I dream,
Dead days arise and hold me in their arms,
And whisper me: All men are born to die,
And dawn is naught save presage of the gleam
That kills our clay, e'en while it gilds her charms.

IN BONNIE SCOTLAND.

PART XII. CONCLUSION.

SITTING on the esplanade at Oban watching the last purple lights on the peaks of Mull, the last warm touches on the inrushing tide, there mingles with the distant tootle of the German band the vehement tinkling of a hand-bell, followed by the hoarse proclamation of the bellman of the

burgh. And presently appears round the corner the old bellman himself with his mottled sun-burnt face that vies in colour with the red kerchief twisted about his neck. Cottagers come to their doors and listen, and here and there an old chum demands and receives a snuff from the well-polished mull. His announcement is not of high importance—just the times of starting of next morning's steamers—but he has a certain audience nevertheless, a few boatmen and some bare-legged children and the cottagers aforesaid standing listening at their doors.

"Ye will have finist your serment for the neet, Tammie, noo," suggests one of the patriarchs of the waterside.

"I'm noo so confident of that," replies Tammie with an air of dignified importance; "a public officer like meself is never sure for ony minute." But for the present there is an end of public announcements, and the bellman deposits himself and his bell upon a bench with something between a sigh and a groan. It is an anxious business, his, somebody suggests.

"Anchous! Ye may weel say that. But I'd niver complain, niver, if it was not for yon raskil Germans," shaking his fist in the direction of the German band, "wi' the closhering clavering noise. The villins! they ought to be shelpit out of the country. Wad ye believe it noo! I come round wi' my bell and stand in front of them, and I ring, and I ring, and I ring again; will the villins stop their clamour! Deil a bit; the moore I ring the moore noise they—Oh, the villins, villins, villins! It's not only to me, sirs, but look at the disrespect to the rawtpeers."

A little reflection shows that it is the ratepayers and not any of the elective peers of Scotland or other minor nobility who are insulted in the person of Tammie, the bellman. But certainly the musicians ought to be taught their place.

"Museeshins," cries Tammie, "I'd no ca' them museeshins, but just clashclammering villins. Oh, if it was a real museeshin, a decent body of our own country—a feedle maybe or the pipes—I'd never say a word. But, man, does he recollect Macphail the piper—he's dead noo, gude man," with a sigh of regret for the memory of the piper; "weel, the moment he'd see me coming wi' the bell, oot wi' the blower oot of his mouth! Eh, there was respect there."

The old bellman marches off muttering imprecations against the German band, whose strains, as they dash off in some

stirring waltz, seem to follow him mockingly.

"I'm thinking it's the kettle and the pot calling each other," said my neighbour, with a low chuckle, a soft-eyed melancholy-looking Highlander who seemed to devote his time to the education of Skye-terriers. Perhaps that was the amusement of his leisure hours; for he talked like a man who knew hard work and hard fare. He had travelled too; was acquainted with London; knew Charing Cross and Parliament Houses, and the Spike.

The Spike, for instance, whereabouts was that?

"I don't rightly know," said the Scot dreamily, "but it must be well-known there, for when I asked a man in the street where I could sleep, being a stranger and with no money, 'Oh,' he said, 'you must go to the spike, any bobbie will show you.' That is what they call the policemen."

And that led to the man telling the story of his journey to London. I wish I could tell it as he told it to me—all simply and graphically, with quaint turns of thought and expression. How he went to London to seek a man, and having no money to pay the railway fare, started to walk. How, after many days' walking, he reached London at last, having fared pretty well on the way, the people in the country being kind, though those in the towns were very hard. How, his last shilling being gone, he found that the man he had come to seek had left his work and had gone, no one could tell him whither. He had looked to the man to give him work, and there was no other man would say anything whatever. And the first night he spent in the spike. It was a fine place, quite clean, but bare-looking. "And they just searchit us, and took away our bits of money, and our pipes and our bawkie, and then the meenister came and said some words of comfort. And they locked us up. But ye never saw such sad characters as were there. I couldna bear to see them nor to listen to them. It was just seemply awful." And he went back no more to the spike, but wandered about the streets by day, afraid to wander far from Charing Cross lest he should lose himself altogether, and slept at night under some trees. At last he said to himself, "If I will starve I will starve in the country, and not among the tall houses and stone streets," and started one evening, but could hardly get clear of London, asking his way for Liverpool, which people did not seem to know, but

reached the fields at last and laid down thankful under a hedge. His troubles seemed to be over when he got beneath that hedge. And in due time he reached his Highland home, not much poorer than when he started.

It is pleasant to loiter here as night draws on and the riding-lights gleam out from the rigging of the ships that are lying in the bay, while the lamps of the town twinkle cheerfully along the sea front. Pleasant, too, to reflect that there is no compulsory early rising to be done in the morning. But it is difficult to stay in bed when the sunbeams flaunt cheerfully about the room; and then the general tintinnabulation of bells! Not church bells, indeed, for I think Oban only boasts of one of the tiny ting-tong order, but vigorous little hand-bells. I fancy I distinguish Tammie's official chime among the rest, but the most are milk-bells. And they bring the milk about in barrels, and serve it out of a tap as if it were so much whisky. There is a house opposite which seems to be let in flats, and at the sound of the milkman's bell there is a general assembly of all the women folk about the place, and a real good gossip all round.

Uncle Jock has chartered a boat for fishing in the bay, but I have a keen desire to get away inland. My eyes are tired of the dazzle of waters, and my ears are buzzing with the murmur of the sea. And so I start alone for Dunstaffnage Castle. Pleasant to the eye are the green woods of Dunolly, where still dwell the descendants of the Lords of Lorn. And most refreshing is the sight of a real market-garden. I have never before appreciated the rich verdure of a row of peas, or the homely tints of a phalanx of cabbages. And then a pleasant little glen with cows feeding on the hillside and a black collie watching them. A cottage by a burn, a whitewashed cottage with thatched roof and children splashing about in the water, and the mother looking on with evidently a keen hearty enjoyment of the sunshine, and sparkling stream, and laughing children, that is quite pleasant to witness. And then the sweet mountain air, the larks twittering and soaring, and the sheep bleating plaintively far and near, the hills warm-tinted with the blooming heather, and a wealth of wild flowers on either hand.

Presently Dunstaffnage comes in sight, an imposing ruin crowning a grey rock on a commanding headland, with a glimpse of the loch that sweeps round it.

It is no ordinary ruin, Dunstaffnage, but an ancient seat of the Scottish kings, and here were kings crowned long ago, sitting upon the great fetish stone of Scotland, the Coronation Stone, which was brought here from Iona, and which before then (tradition has it) had sojourned in the land of Jewry. The legend even has it that Jacob pillowed his head upon it when he dreamt the dream about the ladder. From here the stone was carried to Scone, and from Scone, as everybody knows, to Westminster Abbey, where it still remains—no great thing in the way of a stone, but a memorial of the simple faith of a primitive people.

That the position of the castle was a strong one for defence you can judge by the difficulty there is in getting at it. There is fine pasturage, too, about the head of the loch, where the prince's horses and cattle might well grow fat. But the walk round the head of the loch, crossing a jolly little burnie by means of primitive stepping-stones, the castle in full view, and seeming to grow yet no nearer for all the walking you perform—the walk is certainly more fatiguing in the blaze of a hot sun than the distance can account for.

Half-way I pass a nice little cottage, whitewashed and thatched, with a pigstye handy built of big stones, while some rude farming implements and a pair of oars reared against the gable show the double nature of the cottar's labours. A nice-looking woman is at work by the door. I am very thirsty. Can she give me some milk? "Noo, sir; I've noo in the hoose be noo—I'm sorry." After all, I am only one of a string of people making their way to Dunstaffnage, and presently I overtake a Scotch minister with his plump wife and two daughters. This is by the head of the loch, where the cattle are standing knee-deep in the shallow waters, while a duck sails proudly along, with a brood of ducklings in her wake.

Close by the castle gate is the bailiff's house, where there is milk to be had, and in the snug cool parlour the good wife brings a foaming jug and a bottle of soda-water from a cool cellar hard by. There are two young men from Manchester also refreshing themselves, and the visitors' book shows that this Dunstaffnage is the object of a world-wide pilgrimage. Just above the names of Americans and Austrians is the elaborate Hebrew signature of a Jew from Jerusalem—drawn here, per-

haps, by the fame of Jacob's pillow. The bailiff does the honours of the castle—a mere shell as far as the ancient buildings go—and points out with pride the very hole in the wall where the stone of destiny was once enshrined. Within the castle walls are two more modern dwellings; one the ancient residence of the Campbells, hereditary custodians of the castle, which has still some flavour of royalty about it—a dark and narrow domicile, which was gutted by fire more than a century ago—and a more modern shooting-lodge; both interesting buildings, but rather looked down upon by the bailiff, an intelligent fellow enough, as not sufficiently ancient to be worth notice. But the pride of his heart are the battlements, which are still practicable, with a fine old beacon-iron still standing on the walls, and a beautiful bronze gun, which, as he affirms, was fished up from the wreck of the Florida, that warship of the Spanish Armada which was sunk in Tobermory Bay. All the more is he zealous for the fame of this gun, that a local antiquary has put a slight upon it, having discovered, as he thinks, a date upon it—1700—which is a few years subsequent to the Armada. But our guide designates this meddling critic as a "gowk," and calls attention to the inscription on the breach of the gun, where you may read plainly enough:

ASSUERUS KOSTER ME FECIT AMSTELREDAM
700 A.

Now, this last is not a date, but the number of the gun. Thus avers the guardian of the castle, looking for sympathy and assurance from the passing visitor. It is not a thing to be pronounced upon off-hand, but I should be disposed to back the bailiff.

He is not bailiff only, but ferryman. His skiff is by the shore, and he will carry us across the loch, saving a walk of two miles or so. But then his penny-fee is half-a-crown. There are plenty who will pay it, so that he is not to be blamed for asking it, the Highlands now being "run" on strictly commercial principles. But the best of all farms in these parts, I should say, is a good tourist farm. I should like to gather shillings as quickly and easily as they are picked up in the Highlands. Not that this applies to Dunstaffnage, which is free and open to all the world.

Pleasant is the view from the battlements, too, with the double peak of Ben Cruachan closing the vista of loch and

mountain—Ben who presides at the head of Loch Etive and Loch Awe.

In the wood close by, almost overgrown with bushes and briars, is a ruined chapel of some importance, with fragments of lancet-windows and early mouldings to be made out among the luxuriant growth of ivy and creepers. It is used as a family burial-place, and presents a picture of solitary desolation. And within the nave of the chapel wild and garden flowers grow rampant among the tombs. A fuchsia has grown to the size of a shrub, which says a good deal for the winter climate hereabouts. Probably the chapel belonged to some conventual establishment, which has left no other traces of its existence.

It may be that at times

Dunstaffnage hears the raging
Of Connel with his rocks engaging;

but to-day there is nothing to be heard of the so-called Cataract of Connel, which is merely the rush of the tide in and out through a narrow channel.

Perhaps the pleasantest experience of the day is to lie on the grass, and smoke by the side of the burn that babbles noisily among the stones, with Dunstaffnage mirrored in the placid loch, the hoary ruin among the soft green of the wood, with hills beyond purple in the distance, a white sail stealing quietly round the point, till the stream ceased to babble, for the tide has been stealing up quietly and has stopped its flow. There are sea-shells in the brook and seaweeds on the brae, but the scene is one of deep rural tranquillity as if far removed from the strife and turmoil of the sea.

Coming back to Oban, I find a letter from Mary. She is not too comfortable at Longashpan; but she would stay out her visit, only Archie wants her at home. He was really touched in his affections, it seems, by the attractions of Miss Vanderpump, and fancied that everything was going on swimmingly, when suddenly an affianced lover made his appearance, just landed from the States, and Archie found himself put out in the cold. And she can sympathise with him so much more fully now that she is so happy herself; with other remarks meant for no other eyes but mine. The upshot is that she is going back to Glasgow by Saturday's steamer. Well, that fits in very nicely with my own plans, for I will see Mary back to Glasgow and then make tracks for London. The Gillies family are going to visit some friends in the direction of Loch Awe,

and I take leave of them to-night, for I am going to Staffa and Iona to-morrow, and they may be gone before the steamer returns.

The steamer is well filled—crowded indeed with passengers for the trip to Iona; for the day is fine and beautifully calm, and the run up the Sound of Mull, calling, as on the voyage to Skye, at Salen and Tobermory, is enjoyable in the extreme. But the west side of Mull is scarcely so interesting, with its iron-bound coast, and savage-looking lochs, and bays bristling with rocks. The sea is studded with islets, the Treshnish isles and Fladda, and a curiously shaped island accurately described by its name, the Dutchman's Cup:

And Ulva dark and Colonsay,
And all the troop of islets gay
That guard famed Staffa round.

But they are not gay these islets, not even in the sunshine, with a soft summer breeze and the water crystal-clear, and what they must be when the wild Atlantic surges are raging against their rugged sides imagination fails to picture. And Staffa, too, approached from this side, is disappointing, just a humpy kind of island of sad-coloured rock topped with turf with never a column to boast of as far as one can see. And when the steamer paddles slowly towards the island, one is irresistibly reminded of a wharf on the Thames where old iron is stored with rusty iron rails leaning against the wall. By this time there is a big red lifeboat in attendance, which comes over from the mainland every day to meet the steamer; and the Chevalier's own boat is also lowered, and everybody crowds on board. It is a calm day, with an oily, treacherous roll on the water. Fortunately the passage is short, and we are soon scrambling upon the broken columns at the entrance to Fingal's Cave. And we enter, a long procession—creatures of an hour, butterfly tourists if you like—into this temple of unmeasured ages.

The melancholy wail of the Atlantic surge, with the soft continuous reverberations from the vault above; the deep purple gloom within, flecked with reflections from the restless waves; the massive grandeur of the columns supporting the roof, that seem as if they could bear a world on their shoulders; these things you may feel, but they cannot be described. You must give in to Fingal's Cave. It is wonderful, unapproachable, indescribable. One hastens to retract any disrespectful remarks about Staffa. In that one glimpse of this wondrous cave there is an end of

all dissatisfied grumbings. If we see no more than this the day has been well spent.

Considerable pains have been taken to make the place safe for visitors. There is a balustrade of wire-ropes into the further end of the cave; there are ropes and hand-rails wherever there is any semblance of danger. And it is marvellous to see the old people picking their way about, and enjoying it all to the full; not merely elderly people, but regular veterans in the sere and yellow leaf, a fact which says a good deal for the indomitable vitality of the English race.

From Fingal's Cave we scramble over the tops of broken columns, and up a kind of staircase cut out of the rock to the very top of the island. Not a soul lives upon the island, nor is there any vestige left of human habitation. There are no sheep or cattle, not even rabbits perhaps. And then we take a bird's-eye glance at the other noted caves—the Clamshell with pillars curved, a fashion that resembles on a gigantic scale the cast of a clamshell in wet sand—indeed, the islands seem to be undermined with caves, and one can understand the terror of the solitary shepherd who once essayed a winter residence on the island, but found the noises within and without from wind and wave too terrible to be borne.

As soon as the passengers are on board again we bear away for Iona, which is presently fully in view, a well-balanced island with a rounded boss in the middle, which is Dun-y, a monticle not quite four hundred feet in height, but the champion mount of Iona, and surely gifted with as short a surname as any hill in Britain. The sides slope evenly away from this central boss, with the cathedral—or perhaps the minster would be more correct, as Iona probably never had a bishop—seen in profile on the eastern side.

A strangely stirring sight is this lonely Inchcolmkill and its ruined church, with its varied memories of the olden time. A sacred island to the tribes of these shores, both of Scotland and Ireland, probably even before the advent of Christianity. The custody of the fetish stone—which was there before Columba came, at the latter end of the sixth century—probably entailed some pre-Christian temple on the island, to which, no doubt, the galleys of the neighbouring chiefs brought gifts and offerings, perhaps even captive youth or maiden for the horrid rite of human sacrifice. But at a very early date in the Christian era,

Iona no doubt was colonised by missionaries of the new faith, who took a wise advantage of the reverence already felt for the site. Boetius, the uncritical historian of Scotland, tells a story which he hardly invented, although, perhaps, he adapted it from the chronicles of some other land. Anyhow, he asserts that Fergus the Second, King of the Scots, assisted Alaric the Goth in the sacking of Rome, A.D. 410, and brought away, as part of the plunder, a chest of books which he presented to the monastery of Iona. And this story perhaps gave rise to the belief that a store of valuable manuscripts existed at one time in the library of Iona; the lost books of Livy, indeed, among them, according to some. And it is said that the archives of Iona were eventually transferred to Drontheim, in which diocese it had been included when the Norwegians had possession of the isle, and that they were destroyed in a great fire there.

But it is hardly likely that there was any library there in Columba's time. Columba, indeed, was not of a literary turn, and would no doubt have converted the books of Livy into psalters, if he had once got hold of them. And of these ruins which are now in full view, nunnery, oratory, and minster, there are none directly connected with the life of Columba. It is doubtful whether the church even is on the site of his church. And yet the whole island is as it were dedicated to his memory.

Angels have met him on the way
Beside the blessed martyr's bay,
And by Columba's stone.

The martyr's bay is close by the landing-place, where the population of Iona have turned out to meet us—the brown bare-legged children with saucers of little shells “Shalls, tuppens; Archins, thruppens,” they cry continually, these young Gaelic traders. But there is no time for loitering. MacDonald, the official guide, has us in charge, and bustles us along from one holy place to another. First to the nunnery—the notion of which would have horrified Columba, for in his day not a woman was allowed to set foot on the island. But here are plenty of half-defaced tombs of good sisters, whose lives glided away in this solitary isle; and there were nuns living here in community till well into the seventeenth century. And then to the oratory dedicated to Saint Oran, which may have been founded by the same Margaret who built the little chapel on the

summit of Edinburgh Castle rock, and then up the street of the dead, along which in old times the bodies of the departed great were borne to their last resting-place in the church. Here half-way, on a commanding knoll, is perhaps the most curious and ancient monument in the island—Maclean's Cross so-called, cut from a very thin slab of stone, and curiously carved with intricate knots and patterns. And this is the site of Columba's stone, where it is said he rested just before his death, and where his old grey horse came to greet him by rubbing his nose upon the saint's shoulder, as if conscious that he would see his master no more.

Then we turn into the cathedral—a motley group of pilgrims from many lands, and of all sorts and sizes. A couple of artists, who have set up their easels on a knoll close by, suspend their labours at our approach, and light their pipes, perhaps despising us as not at all in keeping with the scene. And all gather about MacDonald, who takes us to an enclosed mound, which is called the tomb of the kings. So many kings of Scotland, so many of Ireland, so many of Norway, and a few thrown in as kings of France. Our guide is very confident as to the numbers, and we may be quite certain that Duncan is of the number, perhaps with Macbeth's dagger lying among his bones; for what says Shakespeare:

Where is Duncan's body?
Carried to Colme-kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

But there has been a recent burial under the shadow of Iona's church, and, among the accumulated dust of mighty chiefs, lie the crew of an American ship that was lost among the rocks close by.

The ruins of the minster are of various dates, from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, and owe their excellent preservation to the toughness of the building material—the red granite from the Ross of Mull on the opposite side of the sound, hewn from the same quarries which supplied the material for Blackfriars Bridge and the Holborn Viaduct. An archæologist might spend a long time here very profitably, with plenty of architectural problems and knotty sculptures to occupy his mind.

But the steamer is whistling a shrill recall, and the guide has galloped us through the holy places, and he really does it very well, and compresses a great amount of solid information into his short peripatetic lectures. He has got us through

the holy places, and is now as busy as ever in helping to get the people off. The children have followed us everywhere, and now accompany us to the water's edge with their constant cry of "Shalls, shalls, tuppens!" But what a charming water's edge, with coloured rocks, and wondrous shells and sea forms, and lovely seaweeds, waving and beckoning from below, seen through the crystal water!

And when we get on board there is the welcome sound of the dinner-bell, and we turn from the granite cliffs of Mull without regret, and by the time dinner is over we are off Loch Buy, with its solitary mansion surrounded by bluff mountains, and then we sight Kerrera Isle, and soon after run alongside Oban Pier.

And then comes the morning of departure, bright and fair, while all the Gillies family have got up early to see me off. It is a cruel trial to friendship to be fellow-travellers for any length of time; but we have got through it pretty successfully on the whole, and the prospect of a temporary separation excites a glow of warmth in our respective bosoms. I have promised Jennie to puff Ronald unscrupulously wherever I have any influence, and on her part Jennie has pledged herself by fair means or foul to bring Mary back with her for a long visit.

While we are thus engaged the Iona makes her appearance round the headland, and soon we descry Mary standing on the paddle-box, and waving her handkerchief in recognition. And then there is the usual inflooding of passengers, including the German band, while Tammie the bellman watches their departure with grim satisfaction alloyed by the knowledge that they are coming back to-night.

My satisfaction in having Mary as a travelling companion is also subject to a slight alloy. Mrs. Grant has sent a dragon of a maid to escort her as far as the Crinan, and Archie is to meet her at Ardrishaig. So that really we shall only have the isthmus and its passage just to our two selves. Still a good deal may be done on an isthmus. And if I had not been over the ground, the ground of loch and sound and broad ocean, on the outward journey, few are the impressions of travel I should be able to record in returning. The depths of a pair of blue eyes, the inflections of a tender voice, these absorb my perceptions for the moment, and all else seems a vague background of no particular importance. It is all like the slide of a magic lantern

drawn backwards. The piper is waiting there by the lock, and the little children cry "Melk, melk!" and I give them coppers in the fulness of my heart, unrebuked. And we are taken on board the big Columba, and we pass all the sunny rural watering-places on the Clyde, and among the mere skeletons of ships and the noisy hammers that are clothing them with life, and then we are in smoky Glasgow, and driving through its busy streets. And then I remember a tender parting, while the night train for the south stands waiting in trim array. And then a long oblivion of sleep which I only shake off in the dusky daylight of the Marylebone Road.

But my heart is still in the Highlands.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER III. AN APPEAL.

A FOREHEAD rather high than broad, but somewhat concealed at times by the black grey-lined locks that fell over it, eyebrows sharp and projecting, overhanging eyes deep-set, dark, keen, and somewhat restless; the rest of the face clear-cut and well-defined, though the lips were too thin for beauty, and the upper one was too long for perfect symmetry.

Such was Geoffrey Stirling—at all events, as seen by the world in general; notably as seen in such a moment of trial as that in which he first appears on the scene of this story.

His figure was tall and spare, almost gaunt, but not without grace; his hands of wonderful refinement and elegance, yet giving no idea of lack of power, restless when any deep emotion stirred him, infinitely tender and caressing when lightly touching the pretty locks of his only child, little Ralph, the child of his mature age, and, like the late blossom of the year, precious exceedingly.

People called Geoffrey Stirling a shrewd, yet large-hearted man—two qualities hard to find united in one personality—a sternly just man, and yet one to whom no tale of sorrow was ever told in vain; in fact, an embodiment of antitheses.

They knew him not who did not see his powers of gentleness, as shown to his wife, a chronic and ever-complaining sufferer; of tenderness, as drawn forth towards the child of his love.

He had married—later in life than most

men—impetuously for one so cool-headed, bewitched by a woman's delicately-tinted and perfectly-refined loveliness; had dreamed his dream of dual life, and awakened to find himself mated with a fool—a loving fool, and not an exacting one, it was true, but still a woman with whom no equality of companionship was possible.

He looked truth in the face, resolved not to expect more than truth, and to make the best of truth, never letting Lucy, his wife, learn that the truth, for him, held bitter disappointment.

In due time a son was born to him, and then the mother drifted into perpetual ill-health, grew to find a sad pleasure in symptoms, a complacent happiness in detailing the same, and never found in her husband a listless auditor.

Things might have been worse—where, indeed, is the human being whose state and condition might not be worse?

Lucy might have been a jealous fool—the worst type of the class; or a tyrannical fool. As it was, she was thoroughly happy with her ailments and her remedies, always pretty, and given to dainty invalid costumes—"so very interesting," as certain other women averred, not realising the fact that they only had as much of her as they liked, but that to those who had her always it was possible she might become a trifle wearisome. She loved her husband after a tepid kind of fashion, loved him most of all when he put cushions under her head and shawls over her feet, and went softly because the "symptoms" were worse than usual.

In all the gentle uneventful years of her married life she never asked herself if she made him happy. It was enough for her to grasp the one important truth that he was considerate and kind, and always checked little Ralph when the buoyancy of his animal spirits caused him to forget "poor mamma's head." This was, however, not often, for the boy was, as a rule, thoughtful beyond his years.

Mrs. Stirling—or "Mrs. Geoffrey," as she was called to distinguish her from the possible and visionary wife of the elder Stirling—also loved her son; at least, there is every reason to suppose so, since she went into violent hysterics when he cut his hand with the gardener's pruning-knife, and fainted outright when she saw the poor little finger bandaged up with a blood-bedabbled handkerchief. She used to call Ralph her "darling pride," and was very particular that Nurse Prettyman should

keep his clustering locks in the best order; but she never taught him to say his prayers at her knee, or watched the child-mind opening day by day, yearning to guide it aright, as a precious trust.

And so it came about that a love—or rather a passion of tenderness—grew up between father and son. Each life lacked something—the one consciously, the other unconsciously—and each in the other found the lacking thing. The boy Ralph was strikingly like his father—like, yet with a difference. The same landscape seen through the glow of softer light; the same melody set in a sweeter key; such was little Ralph compared to the man who loved him with every fibre of his being. The father's eyes were keen and bright, the child's grave, wistful, and of a lighter hazel, full of golden lights when he laughed; more heavily lashed. The father's eyes could soften to tenderness, but never lighten into merriment: the child's did so, often. The boy's lips, too, were fuller, though the small determined chin showed a tiny cleft, the miniature of the one in his sire's. Ralph's locks held prisoned sunshine in their fair luxuriance, though they grew like his father's, and he had a droll way of tossing them back that was the perfect reflection of the other. The hands, daintily fashioned, long, slender, yet nervous and full of power, were the hands of Geoffrey himself in little. People said the junior partner in the Beckington Bank was an old-looking man to have so young a child; and this was so, not only because he had married late in life, but because his fifty years sat heavily upon him—as years are apt to do upon the head of any man whose lot in life it is to try and make the best of things, carefully avoiding the worst.

As he faced the crowd gathered about the bank, in the sudden silence that had followed so quickly on the heels of tumult, every eye raised to the open window where he stood, it might well have been said that Geoffrey Stirling looked in very truth an old man for his years. It has been said that he had risen from a bed of sickness at the call of a terrible rumour, and that he bore the marks of recent suffering yet about him. Of haste, too, for his hair was unkempt, his dress disordered; his frilled shirt was unbuttoned at the throat, leaving its long and swarthy column exposed; his mulberry-coloured coat had been drawn on hastily, and hung loosely upon a form which had grown some-

what gaunt and hollow in the chest of late.

He leant one hand against the window-frame, raising it high above his head; the other, when first the crowd caught sight of him, was pressed upon his breast, and he seemed to draw his breath heavily, as might one who had laboured up a hill and but just reached the summit.

As he thus stood for a moment silent, immovable, more than ever looking from below like a picture in its frame, a low murmur of sound, like the rise and whirl of myriad flies disturbed from a feast of carrion, came from the watching crowd.

But at the first sound of his voice the hissing of a thousand whispers died.

"My friends——" he said, and got no further for the moment, since a brawny farmer, whip in hand and pale with the situation in which he found himself, cut his speech short with an exclamation uttered in a voice as big and burly as himself:

"That we be, Maister Geoffrey—every man and mother's son of us—let what may be 'oop wi' t' bank, and thee wi' it!"

Again the myriad flies buzzed—in affirmation this time.

"Thanks, thanks," said Geoffrey Stirling, letting his hand drop to his side, and leaning further forward so as to be heard the more plainly; "I am sure of that, Farmer Dale—sure of that; and all the more because I am so sure of that, I wish with all my heart that what I have to tell you now could be softened, or in any way made less bitter and cruel than it is—to you and to me——"

He hesitated a moment, while the crowd swayed and shook as you may see the tree-tops in a forest stir and shake as the wind buffets them this way or that, for every atom in the whole strove to get nearer and nearer to the open window.

Jake, in his floundering, turns, and twistings, seemed to be swimming determinedly against stream, for the thought of the sad face beneath the widow's cap, and of "the patch," at once mumchance, loving, and frightened out of his young wits, clinging on to his mother's rusty black gown, to say nothing of the "three soles" at home, nerved his arm, and dowered those spare legs of his with a new agility.

So Jake got well to the front, and there too was Gabriel Devenant, for whom, just because he had such a mad-like look about him, way had been made by the more sane of the community.

The unhappy man had clasped his hands

behind his head, and with upturned face—a face that looked like a mask save for the glowing eyes that burned from under shaggy brows—listened for the speaker's next words, as might the criminal for his doom.

"I know," said the voice from above, "that a rumour gained credence among you an hour ago to the effect that the bank had stopped payment."

"We'en heered a wur story still, Maister Geoffrey, sin' last hour struck," cried out Farmer Dale, again cutting the thread of the junior partner's story, "and we're looking for to hear yo' call it the domed loi as it is. Choke them as set it goin', say I!"

The hand that grasped the window-frame closed more nervously upon it, and with stronger tension.

"It is not a lie," said Geoffrey Stirling; "it is a cruel truth. A great crime has been committed in our midst—the bank has been robbed!"

As this last word passed the lips of the speaker, there was a shriek from Gabriel Devenant—he flung up his arms as if in a wild appeal to Heaven, and fell convulsed and foaming at the mouth into the arms of those nearest to him.

Dr. Turtle, who had maintained his hardly-won position on the horse-block, keeping up a running commentary to which no one paid the smallest attention, and, having found his snuff-box, taking snuff enough to have blown any other man's head off, at this precipitated himself into the crowd, promptly had the sick man borne to a place of safety, and there set to work to minister to him.

All these things were not done amid peace and silence, for a perfect Babel of voices had arisen, and Geoffrey Stirling, seeing the hopelessness of making himself heard, folded his arms, leant against the side of the window, and waited.

The tumult grew. Some one cried out that it would be well to break into the bank, for those who would suffer by the crime that had been committed could then see for themselves how matters stood. Not one, but a score of hands were raised above the sea of heads, each grasping a stone.

There was a rush and sway towards the lower windows, still closely barred, though broken.

The hubbub increased. The situation became more and more critical.

Of what avail was the valour of Matthew Hawthorne, constable-in-chief of Becklington and the surrounding country, in

the face of such an emergency? Matthew had been a soldier, he had also been provided at the expense of the ratepayers with a tall glazed hat supposed to be an article peculiarly adapted to resist the whacks which the helmet of so doughty a champion would naturally receive in the onerous discharge of his duty.

But the glazed hat was trampled under foot; and Matthew himself—a mere effigy of himself—was ignominiously crushed flat against the wall of the Court House, and there held in durance vile, no one paying the slightest heed to his remonstrances upon such unseemly treatment of a "Queen's officer."

As Geoffrey Stirling watched the turmoil below, a lank and trembling hand was laid upon his sleeve, and a voice, huaky with fear, said urgently:

"Come away, come away, Master Geoffrey. They're mad, they know not what they do. Heaven pity them, and give them back their senses!"

With a sudden sweet smile the man addressed turned a moment to the speaker.

"Never fear, Anthony," he said; "they will not hurt me. It is only an impulse. It will pass."

The large timid eyes, the lank white locks of the manager, were seen at the window as the old man peered at the crowd below.

To his simple mind it seemed as though the end of all things was at hand—as if the sun should suffer fell eclipse instead of shining on unblinkingly on such a scene; as if the heavens might fall, or the solid earth be upheaved and rent.

The house had been robbed; the firm was in trouble. What more had fate in its power to do? How could any man be expected to face such a state of things and live? But yet there was Master Geoffrey, the man whose lips had never yet uttered a word that savoured not of kindness to his faithful servant; the man whom he could call to mind a dark-eyed stripling, full of life and earnestness; the man who, when poor old Anthony lay sick, had sat by his bed, held his hand, cheered him with gentle words of sympathy and hope—there was Master Geoffrey to be thought of.

But the danger passed; the impulse of destruction and revenge rose as a wave rises before the wind, then died. Curiosity was the oil upon the water.

"Why dunnot yo' be still, lads, and hearken to what Maister Geoffrey's got to say?" Farmer Dale had shouted lustily. "Yo can wreck t' bank when yo know all

about the matter, if so be as yo see aught to gain by't."

The common-sense of the man's words commended them to the hearers. The crisis passed, as Geoffrey Stirling had said it would. A hearing was now possible.

"I am glad you have made up your minds to listen to me," he said, and it was wonderful how far the clear resonant voice travelled, "for I want you to know all the truth—that is, as much of it as can be known at present. It is of no use for me to try and make things better than they are, or to deny that heavy loss must come upon many of you. The bank has been broken into, and—hard of belief as such a thing may seem, both to you and to me—almost gutted."

There was a stir and rustle at this, but no one spoke. Ears were strained too intently for tongues to wag easily.

"Every desk and locker has been opened, either by false keys or picklocks. The iron safes in the wall stand wide open; a handful or two of ashes on the hearth are all that remain of the ledgers. This morning, when the head clerk came to his desk, he found it open, and the keys of the safes gone. The evil deed has been very thoroughly done. A great sum in gold, notes for large amounts, bonds, bills, securities—all are missing. It rests with you to give those who will undertake the task every chance of detecting the perpetrators of the crime and of tracing the stolen money. No time has been lost; a messenger has been already despatched to London; a Bow Street runner will be here as quickly as possible. The same messenger will also summon the senior partner to my help. I have done all I can."

"Aye, aye, we dunnut doubt that, Maister Geoffrey," said a voice from the crowd; "we dunnut doubt that, and yo' risen from a sick-bed to coom and try to gi' us a word o' comfort; it's as hard on yo, Maister Geoffrey, as on us and our wives and children, as any man wi' two eyes i' his yed may see for himsen." It was indeed hard for him, how hard they had scarcely realised until they saw him push back the hair from his brow and lift a white and haggard face a moment heavenwards, as if in one swift instant's protest against so cruel a stroke of fate.

"If we can do aught, say so, Maister Geoffrey," put in Farmer Dale, rather husky this time from the strong emotion that swelled within his ample breast. Farmer Dale was—nay, we must change the tense,

and say had been—what is called a man well-to-do, a man whose "savings" were spoken of with respect; a man, too, with a large family, a possession that was counter-balanced by a thrifty wife, and had therefore not stood in the way of that "laying by for a rainy day" that is ever the path of wisdom. Things were going very hardly with Farmer Dale, and yet, of so large-hearted and generous a nature was the man, that he well-nigh forgot his own inevitable loss in looking at the man upon whose shoulders a terrible responsibility rested, and who at a time of such dire need was deprived of the presence and counsel of the head of the house.

"You can do this," answered Geoffrey Stirling. "Strive to be patient with me when I say that, upon my own authority, my own responsibility, I have ordered the bank to be kept closed as it is now; the door to be unbarred to none, not a rifled lock examined, not a smouldering ember stirred. If justice is to have any chance—if any redress be possible for your wrongs and mine—everything must remain exactly as it was found this morning when Davey first gave the alarm that a robbery had been committed. Standing here then before you, feeling the weight of your anger and your sorrow pressing as heavily upon myself as upon you, I ask you to give me your endurance and patience; I ask you to wait—perhaps the hardest thing any of us can have to do, when the heart is hot within us and we burn to redress the wrongs of those dearest to us; and yet I ask it at your hands. If you see fit to break into the bank to satisfy your curiosity as to how the violated sanctuary looks, I cannot hinder you. We should be but a small force arrayed against so many. I am feeble from illness, Anthony from old age. Davey and Sherrard are but striplings, and Gaylad knows most of you too well to fly at you. The matter then rests in your own hands. If you can trust me to act for the best for you all in this emergency, I shall be the debtor of each one of you individually; I shall owe you a debt of gratitude to my dying day."

In giving his own account subsequently of this part of the day's proceedings, Farmer Dale put it thus:

"He wur brave enough wur Maister Geoffrey to stond oop agen things 'till he coom to sayin' how he'd tak' it kind at our hands for to put our trust in him, and possess our minds i' patience, and then his voice got a kind of a shake in it, same as

the church organ afore we got it reetly fettled last Lady Day was a twelvemonth, and he leant his two hands on t' window-sill, and bowed his head, and seemed fair ready to drop wheer he stood. Ay, but it's sorry business, neighbours, and many of us mun carry a light pocket and a heavy heart ower it. Why, they'n say as Gabriel Devenant's gone daft-like wi' the sorrow on't, and Lord knows he'd sorrow enoo along o' that fine madam of his, wi'out such a slap o' the face as this. What dang's me is this, what wur the dog Gaylad after as he never giv' tongue wi' such a scurriment goin' on about him? There's the boy Davey, he's another knot hard to rave is Davey. Such a wick chap as he is, fur all he's a bit ill-balanced about the head and shoulders, and him sleepin' in the room where t' keys was kep' and never hearin' nothin' no more than the dead. It's like as if so many boggarts had been at work, that's what it is."

These sentiments were given utterance to within the hospitable precincts of The Safe Retreat, a public-house of much respectability, facing into Main Street, but abutting upon the river in the form of a long narrow tea-garden running downhill all the way, and dotted here and there by rustic arbours, more or less frequented by spiders, but looked upon as delightful places to spend a summer's afternoon in, nevertheless.

Needless to say, The Safe Retreat had reaped a glorious harvest during the day that was now passed. When, indeed, does not mental agitation render the need for refreshment imperative? Among a certain class of the human community is not thirst the natural outcome of emotion? In truth the feminine population of Beckington were apt to demur to the adjective "safe" as applied to The Retreat; and many a man was glad to take his wife to tea in one of the rustic erections in the back-garden of a summer's evening, as a sort of plea for a kindly toleration of his own frequent appearances in the front-parlour of that seductive hostelry.

On the present occasion certain habitués—men of mark, so to speak—were gathered together in that pleasant meeting-place, while a kind of outer fringe of unwonted, or at all events unnoted guests, crowded round the nucleus of talent in the centre. Farmer Dale was listened to with respect. He was—or had been until that morning—a man of substance, a man of influence, of acknowledged probity, and of a conviviality

always restrained within proper bounds; he was one whose opinion naturally carried weight, whether on the commonplace subject of the probable yield of the turnip crop, or on some social matter of higher import.

His utterances upon this day's wonderful events are therefore not things to be alighted; but rather pondered upon as likely to contain much seed of profound wisdom and probability. When he had done speaking there was a murmur of assent from the select few, and a response from the outer fringe.

The chief constable's glazed hat had been rescued from among the legs of the populace, and its various indentations smoothed out as far as such treatment was possible, but it still presented a battered and dissipated appearance as it reposed upon the bench beside its owner, who now and again gave it a sidelong rueful glance. Matthew himself appeared also alightly the worse for his late experiences, and had a bruise about the size of a well-grown rib-stone-pippin over his left eye, which unnatural protuberance his wife had securely bound with a checked pocket-handkerchief and a bit of raw beefsteak. Altogether the chief constable presented the appearance of a soldier who had seen some active service, and suffered thereby both in person and attire.

"You say well, Farmer Dale," said he in his slow manner, refilling his pipe leisurely as he spoke; "the boy Davey has, to use a figure o' speech, bin as heavy as lead upon my mind this while back. What was he hup to? What was he a-doin'? says I to myself, over and over again. What was the boy Davey a-doin' of?"

"Why nothing—that's the worst of it; that's the wonder of it," replied the farmer; "sleeping like a young pig i' straw, and I'm danged if I know how he did it either, for, as I said afore, he's a wick chap is Davey, and full o' sense too for such a little fellow. Now if it had been that lazy lad, Abel Dibbs," continued the oracle, turning to Jake, who jumped as if a flea had bitten him at the suddenness of the attack, "I'd have said nowt, but just loike what you might have looked for, for by all accounts he beats fattest sou i' the sty for snoozing and snoring does Abel."

"Ay, that does he," said Jake, rubbing up his hair and mightily smiting his knee to give greater emphasis to his words; "he's an Abel as 'ull make a Cain o' me, one of these days, I know, wi' those aggravating ways o' his'n; but I'm o' your way o' thinkin', Farmer Dale, about the boy

Davey. It's a wonderment all through, that's what it is. And then there's the dog Gaylad. I've heard tell that he sleeps stretched across Davey's feet. Summat must ha' bewitched the two on 'em, and made 'em deaf as adders, and heavy-headed as Softie there, when he lies down i' the ditch on's way home, and takes it for an honest truckle-bedstead. Whoy, I've heard tell as he's bin known to turn round—and him all among the duckweed and jacky-sharps—and holler out to's missus to know what toime it wur."

Their hearts are sad within them, but there is a laugh at this, and Softie—a chuckle-headed fellow, who apparently owns no other name—laughs among the rest: the more heartily, indeed, since he has never owned a spare shilling in his life, and having nothing to lose, was none the worse for the day's events—rather the better, indeed, several people having "treated" him in that generous spirit which is often the outcome of wide-spread agitation and excitement.

Any other cobbler than Jake, and any other fool than Softie, would have been out of place in the select inner circle of the gathering at The Safe Retreat; but both individuals were Becklington notabilities, each in his several way. Therefore was Softie tolerated and Jake listened to, by such men as Farmer Dale and Matthew Hawthorne, constable-in-chief.

Having had the laugh with him in the matter last under discussion, Jake, spurred to greater efforts of social success, as is the way with most of us, again took up his parable.

"I'm minded, too, to think, neighbours," he said with a knowing air, as of one whose habit it was to dig deep down and get at the root of things, "that there stands no man in Becklington, or out of it, to be more pitied this day than Maister Geoffrey Stirling; and him only rose, as one may put it, straight off a sick-bed, which any one may see by t' looks on him. All the 'sponsibilities is a-weighin' on him, the senior being absent, and mighty things, such as no man could foresee, comin' to pass. When first my eyes lighted on him, the voice within me said: 'Jake, my brave fellow, as sure as one day you shall walk in glory——'"

But here Jake was tripped up, and learnt that social success is at all times an uncertain and slippery eminence.

"What's that inner voice o' thine bin up to now, Jake?" said Amos Callender,

who came dropping in at the moment, promptly made way for by the outer fringe, and taking a place alongside Farmer Dale. "You have a care what it leads you on to. It seems a flatterin' kind of a voice, and flatterers is mostly liars. Have a care, neighbour—have a care! 'With the flatterer are busy mockers,' so Scriptor tells us, and that voice o' thine is too fair-spoken, too full of 'brave fellows,' and 'good fellows,' and such like, to be altogether trusted in. If it were to tak' to remindin' yo as we're all nobbut poor perishin' worms, yo among the rest, I'd think better of it. If yo come to that," continued the worthy tanner, upon whose temper the day's work had told considerably, "how dost thee know thee't ever walk in glory at all?"

Jake, who had nothing but the inner voice to fall back upon by way of testimony, looked rather blank, nor was his discomposure lessened by Matthew Hawthorne (who oftentimes took too much upon himself by reason of his office, in the opinion of some people) cutting in in a personal and exceedingly unpleasant manner; in fact, touching upon a tender point.

"If so be as thou dost come to such promotion, Jake," said he, still bearing a grudge against the universe generally in the matter of that battered hat of his, and glad to vent his spleen upon any object that chanced to present itself, "I'm trusting the Lord 'ull do summat for those legs o' thine, or, by my wig! thou't cut but a poor figure, lad, along o' the rest of 'em!"

Farmer Dale burst into one of his loud guffaws at this and the sight of Jake's face, which looked for all the world as if he'd got a sudden squeeze of lemon in his mouth; and things might have got rather hot but for Amos Callender, whose good heart misgave him for having set the ball going and brought poor Jake to sorrow.

"Never you mind, neighbour," he said, giving the little cobbler a slap on the back hearty enough to have knocked him over if he hadn't been securely seated; "a man's legs ain't of no count at all, if so be as his heart's i' the right place. Ain't we told i' the Book that the Lord delighteth not in any man's legs, but 'loveth a cheerful giver'? And didn't I hear tell on a' thou didst for the widow and fatherless this day? So say no more, neighbour—say no more. I'm a bit cross-grained to-night, and that's all about it. It's thinkin' o' that lass o' mine, and the savins I thought to mak' a lady of her wi', and them of no more account than the

grass as is cut down and cast i' the oven, as the sayin' goes. It's that as set me on thrapin' at that inner voice o' thine. But bear no malice, Jake—bear no malice."

At this the chief constable—great men are but human, after all—thawed too, and nodded at the object of all these comments, as much as to convey a comforting hope that weakly legs, however knock-kneed, were by no means to be looked upon as hindrances to an ultimate glorified condition. So once more the bank robbery, the "bewitchment" of the boy Davey and the dog Gaylad, the abject despair of old Anthony Geddes, the rage of the senior partner when he should learn the dread and terrible news even now on its way to him, the expected advent of a Bow Street runner in their midst, the probable discovery of the criminal or criminals concerned in consequence of such a mighty arm of the law being stretched out to hunt down and pounce upon the same—all these topics, and many akin to them, kept tongues going at The Safe Retreat up to an hour unwontedly late.

Then, still full of speculation, of wonder, and of fear, the party broke up, went out into the quiet autumn night, and, as by one consent, wandered toward the market-place.

Like a dead man whom no clamour can awaken, the bank showed its closed and shuttered windows, like blind, unseeing eyes, to the brooding night, even as it had shown them to sunlit hours of the day that was past.

Pacing slowly to and fro before the passage that led to the lurking door, was a watchman, clothed in what appeared to be an endless succession of capes one above another, so that his width became abnormal, and, he being a short man, entirely disproportioned to his height.

He carried a lantern in his hand, and was assiduous in flashing it upon every object within reach; but the moon outshone its light, making its beam look no more than a sort of magnified and exceedingly active glowworm.

Even the old stones of the market-place seemed a silver pavement in the lovely radiance of the Queen of Night, and the ivy leaves about the chimney were silver too.

All at once a figure, black and sinister, stole out from the shadow—a figure in slouched hat and long drooping cloak—a figure that, standing a moment in the centre of a patch of light, raised high its clasped

hands in one supreme gesture of despair, and then passed on with drooping head, while the sound of a sobbing moan made the group on the farther side of the pavement fall back a pace or two.

Said Jake, clutching the tanner convulsively: "It's Gabriel Devenant, poor chap!"

To which the latter, drawing a long breath, replied: "He had never much to boast of by way of a head-piece, and this blow has broke clean through what roofing there was. Lord be wi' him for a sorry fellow this night as needs comfort sorely."

"Amen," said Jake, and he meant the aspiration to do double duty, for he thought of the widow whose "little all" was lost, and of the tears she might be shedding even then, over the "three soles and the patch" lying sleeping in their little beds.

"Nay, though," thought Jake by way of amendment to this mental picture, "'patch' won't be sleeping; he'll be keeping watch with the mother, I'll go bail—aye, that will he—and trying his best to comfort her too."

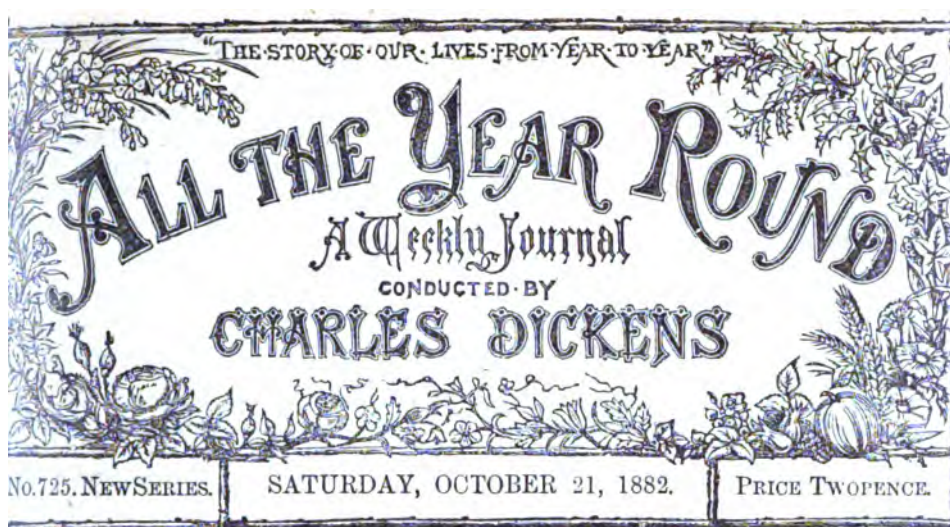
Just as our little group was breaking up—for Amos saw a light glimmering in the gable, and knew that Bess was keeping vigil—and Jake, catching a gleam through the chink of the shop-shutter, felt an inward conviction that the boy Abel, in the scantiest attire, was at some game of unlawful delight—a sad lugubrious plaint broke upon the ear of night.

"Yon's Gaylad," said Matthew, "he's bayin' t' mune—dogs conna abide t' mune."

"Nay, nay," said Farmer Dale, cramming his hat firmer on his head, preparatory to setting out home at a good round pace; "'taint t' moon as the creetur's bayin' at. He's keenin' over the wrong done this day. I tell thee, lad, them dumb beasts knows a deal more nor anyone as hasn't made a stooody on 'em would be apt to fancy."

And truly it seemed as if the farmer was right; for, though a sudden cloud had come over the moon, and the stones in the market-place become commonplace paving-stones in lieu of a silver pavement, though the ivy-leaves showed grey and dead, and the watchman's lantern became as a "light to rule the night," the last sound that caught his ear as he reached the end of the street and struck out into the fields, was the keening of the dog who had been—so said the wisacres—bewitched into unfaithfulness and a sluggardly disloyalty to his trust.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXX. PERSECUTION.

IN the meantime Florence Mountjoy was not passing her time pleasantly at Brussels. Various troubles there attended her. All her friends around her were opposed to her marriage with Harry Annesley. Harry Annesley had become a very unsavoury word in the mouths of Sir Magnus and the British Embassy generally. Mrs. Mountjoy told her grief to her brother-in-law, who thoroughly took her part, as did also, very strongly, Lady Mountjoy. It got to be generally understood that Harry was a "mauvais sujet." Such was the name that was attached to him, and the belief so conveyed was thoroughly entertained by them all. Sir Magnus had written to friends in London, and the friends in London bore out the reports that were so conveyed. The story of the midnight quarrel was told in a manner very prejudicial to poor Harry, and both Sir Magnus and his wife saw the necessity of preserving their niece from anything so evil as such a marriage. But Florence was very firm, and was considered to be very obstinate. To her mother she was obstinate but affectionate. To Sir Magnus she was obstinate and in some degree respectful. But to Lady Mountjoy she was neither affectionate nor respectful. She took a great dislike to Lady Mountjoy, who endeavoured to domineer; and who, by the assistance of the two others, was, in fact, tyrannical. It was her opinion that the girl should be compelled to abandon the man, and Mrs. Mountjoy found herself constrained to follow this advice. She did love her daughter, who was her only child. The main interest of her life was centred in

her daughter. Her only remaining ambition rested on her daughter's marriage. She had long revelled in the anticipation of being the mother-in-law of the owner of Tretton Park. She had been very proud of her daughter's beauty. Then had come the first blow, when Harry Annesley had come to Montpellier Place and had been welcomed by Florence. Mrs. Mountjoy had seen it all long before Florence had been aware of it. And the first coming of Harry had been long before the absolute disgrace of Captain Scarborough, — at any rate before the tidings of that disgrace had reached Cheltenham. Mrs. Mountjoy had been still able to dream of Tretton Park, after the Jews had got their fingers on it, — even after the Jews had been forced to relinquish their hold. It can hardly be said that up to this very time Mrs. Mountjoy had lost all hope in her nephew, thinking that as the property had been entailed some portion of it must ultimately belong to him. She had heard that Augustus was to have it, and her desires had vacillated between the two. Then Harry had positively declared himself, and Augustus had given her to understand how wretched, how mean, how wicked had been Harry's conduct. And he fully explained to her that Harry would be penniless. She had indeed been aware that Buston, quite a trifling thing compared to Tretton, was to belong to him. But entails were nothing nowadays. It was part of the radical abomination to which England was being subjected. Not even Buston was now to belong to Harry Annesley. The small income which he had received from his uncle was stopped. He was reduced to live upon his Fellowship, — which would be stopped also if he married. She even despised him because he was the Fellow of a College. She had looked for a

husband for her daughter so much higher than any college could produce. It was not from any lack of motherly love that she was opposed to Florence, or from any innate cruelty that she handed her daughter over to the tender mercies of Lady Mountjoy.

And since she had been at Brussels there had come up further hopes. Another mode had shown itself of escaping Harry Annesley, who was of all catastrophes the most dreaded and hated. Mr. Anderson, the second secretary of Legation, he whose business it was to ride about the boulevard with Sir Magnus, had now declared himself in form. "Never saw a fellow so bowled over," Sir Magnus had declared, by which he had intended to signify that Mr. Anderson was now truly in love. "I've seen him spooney a dozen times," Sir Magnus had said confidentially to his sister-in-law, "but he has never gone to this length. He has asked a lot of girls to have him, but he has always been off it again before the week was over. He has written to his mother now." And Mr. Anderson showed his love by very unmistakable signs. Sir Magnus too, and Lady Mountjoy, were evidently on the same side as Mr. Anderson. Sir Magnus thought there was no longer any good in waiting for his nephew, the captain, and of that other nephew, Augustus, he did not entertain any very high idea. Sir Magnus had corresponded lately with Augustus, and was certainly not on his side. But he so painted Mr. Anderson's prospects in life, as did also Lady Mountjoy, as to make it appear that if Florence could put up with young Anderson she would do very well with herself.

"He's sure to be a baronet some of these days, you know," said Sir Magnus.

"I don't think that would go very far with Florence," said her mother.

"But it ought. Look about in the world and you'll see that it does go a long way. He'd be the fifth baronet."

"But his elder brother is alive."

"The queerest fellow you ever saw in your born days, and his life is not worth a year's purchase. He's got some infernal disease—nostalgia, or what d'ye call it? which never leaves him a moment's peace, and then he drinks nothing but milk. Sure to go off,—cock sure."

"I shouldn't like Florence to count upon that."

"And then Hugh Anderson, the fellow here, is very well off as it is. He has four

hundred pounds here, and another five hundred pounds of his own. Florence has, or will have, four hundred pounds of her own. I should call them deuced rich. I should indeed, as beginners. She could have her pair of ponies here, and what more would she want?"

These arguments did go very far with Mrs. Mountjoy, the further because in her estimation Sir Magnus was a great man. He was the greatest Englishman at any rate in Brussels, and where should she go for advice but to an Englishman? And she did not know that Sir Magnus had succeeded in borrowing a considerable sum of money from his second secretary of Legation.

"Leave her to me for a little,—just leave her to me," said Lady Mountjoy.

"I would not say anything hard to her," said the mother, pleading for her naughty child.

"Not too hard, but she must be made to understand. You see there have been misfortunes. As to Mountjoy Scarborough, he's past hoping for."

"You think so?"

"Altogether. When a man has disappeared there's an end of him. There was Lord Baltiboy's younger son disappeared, and he turned out to be a Zouave corporal in a French regiment. They did get him out, of course, but then he went preaching in America. You may take it for granted, that when a man has absolutely vanished from the clubs, he'll never be any good again as a marrying man."

"But there's his brother, who, they say, is to have the property."

"A very cold-blooded sort of young man, who doesn't care a straw for his own family." He had received very sternly the overtures for a loan from Sir Magnus. "And he, as I understand, has never declared himself in Florence's favour. You can't count upon Augustus Scarborough."

"Not just count upon him."

"Whereas there's young Anderson, who is the most gentlemanlike young man I know, all ready. It will have been such a turn of luck your coming here and catching him up."

"I don't know that it can be called a turn of luck. Florence has a very nice fortune of her own."

"And she wants to give it to this penniless reprobate. It is just one of those cases in which you must deal roundly with a girl. She has to be frightened, and that's about the truth of it."

After this, Lady Mountjoy did succeed in getting Florence alone with herself into her morning-room. When her mother told her that her aunt wished to see her, she answered first that she had no special wish to see her aunt. Her mother declared that in her aunt's house she was bound to go when her aunt sent for her. To this Florence demurred. She was, she thought, her aunt's guest, but by no means at her aunt's disposal. But at last she obeyed her mother. She had resolved that she would obey her mother in all things but one, and therefore she went one morning to her aunt's chamber.

But as she went she was, on the first instance, caught by her uncle, and taken by him into a little private sanctum behind his official room. "My dear," he said, "just come in here for two minutes."

"I am on my way up to my aunt."

"I know it, my dear. Lady Mountjoy has been talking it all over with me. Upon my word you can't do anything better than take young Anderson."

"I can't do that, Uncle Magnus."

"Why not? There's poor Mountjoy Scarborough, he has gone astray."

"There is no question of my cousin."

"And Augustus is no better."

"There is no question of Augustus either."

"As to that other chap, he isn't any good—he isn't indeed."

"You mean Mr. Annesley."

"Yes; Harry Annesley as you call him. He hasn't got a shilling to bless himself with, or wouldn't have if he was to marry you."

"But I have got something."

"Not enough for both of you, I'm afraid. That uncle of his has disinherited him."

"His uncle can't disinherit him."

"He's quite young enough to marry and have a family, and then Annesley will be disinherited. He has stopped his allowance anyway, and you mustn't think of him. He did something uncommonly unhand-some the other day, though I don't quite know what."

"He did nothing unhandsome, Uncle Magnus."

"Of course a young lady will stand up for her lover, but you will really have to drop him. I'm not a hard sort of man, but this was something that the world will not stand. When he thought the man had been murdered he didn't say anything about it for fear they should tax him with

it. And then he swore he had never seen him. It was something of that sort."

"He never feared that anyone would suspect him."

"And now young Anderson has proposed. I should not have spoken else, but it's my duty to tell you about young Anderson. He's a gentleman all round."

"So is Mr. Annesley."

"And Anderson has got into no trouble at all. He does his duty here uncommonly well. I never had less trouble with any young fellow than I have had with him. No licking him into shape,—or next to none;—and he has a very nice private income. You together would have plenty, and could live here till you had settled on apartments. A pair of ponies would be just the thing for you to drive about and support the British interests. You think of it, my dear; and you'll find that I'm right." Then Florence escaped from that room and went up to receive the much more severe lecture which she was to have from her aunt.

"Come in, my dear," said Lady Mountjoy in her most austere voice. She had a voice which could assume austerity when she knew her power to be in the ascendant. As Florence entered the room Miss Abbott left it by a door on the other side. "Take that chair, Florence. I want to have a few minutes' conversation with you." Then Florence sat down. "When a young lady is thinking of being married a great many things have to be taken into consideration." This seemed to be so much a matter of fact that Florence did not feel it necessary to make any reply. "Of course I am aware you are thinking of being married."

"Oh yes," said Florence.

"But to whom?"

"To Harry Annesley," said Florence, intending to imply that all the world knew that.

"I hope not; I hope not. Indeed I may say that it is quite out of the question. In the first place he is a beggar."

"He has begged from none," said Florence.

"He is what the world calls a beggar, when a young man without a penny thinks of being married."

"I'm not a beggar, and what I've got will be his."

"My dear, you're talking about what you don't understand. A young lady cannot give her money away in that manner. It will not be allowed. Neither your

mother, nor Sir Magnus, nor will I permit it." Here Florence restrained herself, but drew herself up in her chair as though prepared to speak out her mind if she should be driven. Lady Mountjoy would not permit it! She thought that she would feel herself quite able to tell Lady Mountjoy that she had neither power nor influence in the matter, but she determined to be silent a little longer. "In the first place a gentleman who is a gentleman never attempts to marry a lady for her money."

"But when a lady has the money she can express herself much more clearly than she could otherwise."

"I don't quite understand what you mean by that, my dear."

"When Mr. Annesley proposed to me he was the acknowledged heir to his uncle's property."

"A trumpery affair at the best of it."

"It would have sufficed for me. Then I accepted him."

"That goes for nothing from a lady. Of course your acceptance was contingent on circumstances."

"It was so,—on my regard. Having accepted him, and as my regard remains just as warm as ever, I certainly shall not go back because of anything his uncle may do. I only say this to explain that he was quite justified in his offer. It was not for my small fortune that he came to me."

"I'm not so sure of that."

"But if my money can be of any use to him, he's quite welcome to it. Sir Magnus spoke to me about a pair of ponies. I'd rather have him than a pair of ponies."

"I'm coming to that just now. Here is Mr. Anderson."

"Oh yes; he's here."

There was certainly a touch of impatience in the tone in which this was uttered. It was as though she had said that Mr. Anderson had so contrived that she could have no doubt whatever about his continued presence. Mr. Anderson had made himself so conspicuous as to be visible to her constantly. Lady Mountjoy, who intended at present to sing Mr. Anderson's praises, felt this to be impertinent.

"I don't know what you mean by that. Mr. Anderson has behaved himself quite like a gentleman, and you ought to be very proud of any token you may receive of his regard and affection."

"But I'm not bound to return it."

"You are bound to think of it when

those who are responsible for your actions tell you to do so."

"Mamma, you mean!"

"I mean your uncle, Sir Magnus Mountjoy." She did not quite dare to say that she had meant herself. "I suppose you will admit that Sir Magnus is a competent judge of young men's characters?"

"He may be a judge of Mr. Anderson, because Mr. Anderson is his clerk."

There was something of an intention to depreciate in the word "clerk." Florence had not thought much of Mr. Anderson's worth, nor, as far as she had seen them, of the duties generally performed at the British Embassy. She was ignorant of the peculiar little niceties and intricacies which required the residence at Brussels of a gentleman with all the tact possessed by Sir Magnus. She did not know that while the mere international work of the office might be safely entrusted to Mr. Blow and Mr. Bunderdown, all those little niceties, that smiling and that frowning, that taking off of hats and only half taking them off, that genial easy manner and that stiff hauteur, formed the peculiar branch of Sir Magnus himself,—and, under Sir Magnus, of Mr. Anderson. She did not understand that even to that pair of ponies which was promised to her, were to be attached certain important functions which she was to control as the deputy of the great man's deputy. And now she had called the great man's deputy a clerk!

"Mr. Anderson is no such thing," said Lady Mountjoy.

"His young man, then—or private secretary, only somebody else is that."

"You are very impertinent and very ungrateful. Mr. Anderson is second secretary of Legation. There is no officer attached to our establishment of more importance. I believe you say it on purpose to anger me. And then you compare this gentleman to Mr. Annesley, a man to whom no one will speak."

"I will speak to him." Had Harry heard her say that he ought to have been a happy man in spite of his trouble.

"You! What good can you do him?" Florence nodded her head, almost imperceptibly, but still there was a nod, signifying more than she could possibly say. She thought that she could do him a world of good if she were near him, and some good too though she were far away. If she were with him she could hang on to his arm,—or perhaps at some future time round his neck,—and tell him that she would be

true to him though all others might turn away. And she could be just as true where she was, though she could not comfort him by telling him so with her own words. Then it was that she resolved upon writing that letter. He should already have what little comfort she might administer in his absence. "Now listen to me, Florence. He is a thorough reprobate."

"I will not hear him so called. He is no reprobate."

"He has behaved in such a way that all England is crying out about him. He has done that which will never allow any gentleman to speak to him again."

"Then there will be more need that a lady should do so. But it is not true."

"You put your knowledge of character against that of Sir Magnus."

"Sir Magnus does not know the gentleman;—I do. What's the good of talking of it, aunt? Harry Annesley has my word, and nothing on earth shall induce me to go back from it. Even were he what you say I would be true to him."

"You would?"

"Certainly I would. I could not willingly begin to love a man whom I knew to be base; but when I had loved him I would not turn because of his baseness. I couldn't do it. It would be a great—a terrible misfortune; but it would have to be borne. But here——. I know all the story to which you allude."

"I know it too."

"I am quite sure that the baseness has not been on his part. In defence of my name he has been silent. He might have spoken out, if he had known all the truth then. I was as much his own then as I am now. One of these days I suppose I shall be more so."

"You mean to marry him then?"

"Most certainly I do; or I will never be married; and as he is poor now, and I must have my own money when I am twenty-four, I suppose I shall have to wait till then."

"Will your mother's word go for nothing with you?"

"Poor mamma! I do believe that mamma is very unhappy because she makes me unhappy. What may take place between me and mamma I am not bound, I think, to tell you. We shall be away soon, and I shall be left to mamma alone."

And mamma would be left alone to her daughter, Lady Mountjoy thought. The visit must be prolonged so that at last Mr. Anderson might be enabled to prevail.

The visit had been originally intended for a month, but it was now prolonged indefinitely. After that conversation between Lady Mountjoy and her niece two or three things happened, all bearing upon our story. Florence at once wrote her letter. If things were going badly in England with Harry Annesley. Harry should at any rate have the comfort of knowing what were her feelings—if there might be comfort to him in that. "Perhaps after all he won't mind what I may say," she thought to herself. But only pretended to think it, and at once flatly contradicted her own "perhaps." Then she told him most emphatically not to reply. It was very important that she should write. He was to receive her letter, and there must be an end of it. She was quite sure that he would understand her. He would not subject her to the trouble of having to tell her own people that she was maintaining a correspondence, for it would amount to that. But still when the time came for the answer she had counted it up to the hour. And when Sir Magnus sent for her and handed to her the letter,—having discussed that question with her mother,—she fully expected it, and felt properly grateful to her uncle. She wanted a little comfort too, and when she had read the letter she knew that she had received it.

There had been a few words spoken between the two elder ladies after the interview between Florence and Lady Mountjoy. "She is a most self-willed young woman," said Lady Mountjoy.

"Of course she loves her lover," said Mrs. Mountjoy, desirous of making some excuse for her own daughter. The girl was very troublesome, but was not the less her daughter. "I don't know any of them that don't, who are worth anything."

"If you regard it in that light, Sarah, she'll get the better of you. If she marries him she will be lost; that is the way you have got to look at it. It is her future happiness you must think of—and respectability. She is a headstrong young woman and has to be treated accordingly."

"What would you do?"

"I would be very severe."

"But what am I to do? I can't beat her; I can't lock her up in a room."

"Then you mean to give it up?"

"No, I don't; you shouldn't be so cross to me," said poor Mrs. Mountjoy. When it had reached this the two ladies had become intimate. "I don't mean to give it up at all: but what am I to do?"

"Remain here for the next month; and,—and worry her; let Mr. Anderson have his chance with her. When she finds that everything will smile with her if she accepts him, and that her life will be made a burden to her if she still sticks to her Harry Annesley, she'll come round if she be like other girls. Of course a girl can't be made to marry a man; but there are ways and means." By this Lady Mountjoy meant that the utmost cruelty should be used which would be compatible with a good breakfast, dinner, and bedroom. Now Mrs. Mountjoy knew herself to be incapable of this, and knew also, or thought that she knew, that it would not be efficacious.

"You stay here,—up to Christmas if you like it," said Sir Magnus to his sister-in-law. "She can't but see Anderson every day and that goes a long way. She of course puts on a resolute air as well as she can. They all know how to do that. Do you be resolute in return. The deuce is in it if we can't have our way with her among us. When you talk of ill usage, nobody wants you to put her in chains. There are different ways of killing a cat. You get friends to write to you from England about young Annesley, and I'll do the same. The truth of course I mean."

"Nothing can be worse than the truth," said Mrs. Mountjoy, shaking her head sorrowfully.

"Just so," said Sir Magnus, who was not at all sorrowful to hear so bad an account of the favoured suitor. "Then we'll read her the letters. She can't help hearing them. Just the true facts, you know. That's fair; nobody can call that cruel. And then, when she breaks down and comes to our call, we'll all be as soft as mother's milk to her. I shall see her going about the boulevards with a pair of ponies yet." Mrs. Mountjoy felt that when Sir Magnus spoke of Florence coming to his call, he did not know her daughter. But she had nothing better to do than to obey Sir Magnus. Therefore she resolved to stay at Brussels for another period of six weeks, and told Florence that she had so resolved. Just at present Brussels and Cheltenham would be all the same to Florence.

"It will be a dreadful bore having them so long," said poor Lady Mountjoy piteously to her husband. For in the presence of Sir Magnus she was by no means the valiant woman that she was with some of her friends.

"You find everything a bore. What's the trouble?"

"What am I to do with them?"

"Take 'em about in the carriage. Lord bless my soul! what have you got a carriage for?"

"Then, with Miss Abbott, there's never room for any one else."

"Leave Miss Abbott at home, then. What's the good of talking to me about Miss Abbott? I suppose it doesn't matter to you who my brother's daughter marries?" Lady Mountjoy did not think that it did matter much; but she declared that she had already evinced the most tender solicitude. "Then stick to it. The girl doesn't want to go out every day. Leave her alone, where Anderson can get at her."

"He's always out riding with you."

"No, he's not; not always. And leave Miss Abbott at home. Then there'll be room for two others. Don't make difficulties. Anderson will expect that I shall do something for him, of course."

"Because of the money," said Lady Mountjoy, whispering.

"And I've got to do something for her too." Now there was a spice of honesty about Sir Magnus. He knew that as he could not at once pay back these sums, he was bound to make it up in some other way. The debts would be left the same. But that would remain with Providence.

Then came Harry's letter, and there was a deep consultation. It was known to have come from Harry by the Buntingford postmark. Mrs. Mountjoy proposed to consult Lady Mountjoy; but to that Sir Magnus would not agree. "She'd take her skin off her if she could now that she's angered," said the lady's husband, who, no doubt, knew the lady well. "Of course she'll learn that the letter has been written, and then she'll throw it in our teeth. She wouldn't believe that it had gone astray in coming here. We should give her a sort of a whip-hand over us." So it was decided that Florence should have her letter.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

THE Life of Timon of Athens was first published in the folio of 1623. The play is very carelessly printed, and with the exception of the announcement at the outset, of *Actus Primus, Scena Prima*, there is no indication of the author's design to

divide his work into acts or scenes. "The play is clearly not all Shakespeare's," notes one commentator, who declines to wonder that the poet left it unfinished, and allowed another dramatist to do what he listed with it. An earlier drama dealing with the story of Timon is believed to lie at the foundation of Shakespeare's play. It is doubtful, however, whether the poet was really indebted to the Timon of Athens, supposed to have been written or transcribed about 1600, and first printed by the Shakespeare Society in 1842: a play "evidently intended," as Mr. Dyce holds, "for the amusement of an academic audience," never performed in London, and "likely to have been read only by a few of the author's particular friends, to whom transcripts of it had been presented." As Steevens and Malone have pointed out, however, certain incidents are common to both plays. There is a scene in the manuscript, or academic play, resembling the scene of the banquet given by Shakespeare's Timon to his flatterers. Instead of warm water, the earlier Timon sets stones painted like artichokes before his guests, and afterwards beats them out of the room. He then retires to the woods attended by his faithful steward, who like Kent in *King Lear*, has disguised himself to continue his services to his master. In the earlier play, according to Malone, Shakespeare found among other incidents "the faithful steward, the banquet scene, and the story of Timon's being possessed of great sums of gold which he had dug up in the woods; a circumstance which he could not have had from Lucian, there being then no translation of the dialogue that relates to this subject."

The poet had, of course, read that twenty-eighth novel in *Painter's Palace of Pleasure*, which tells of "the strange and beastly nature of Timon of Athens, enemy to mankind, with his death, buriall and epitaph;" and perhaps also the Account of Timon of Athens, in Sir Richard Barchley's *Discourse of the Felicity of Man*, 1598. With North's Plutarch, Shakespeare was well acquainted, and he has certainly availed himself very completely of the account of Timon contained in the *Lives of Alcibiades and Mark Antony*. It has been thought that the character of Apemantus must have been derived from Lucian's Dialogue, but as Mr. Douce suggests, "We are at liberty to doubt how far Apemantus is a copy from Lucian, or rather to believe that he is a highly finished portrait after a very slight

sketch by Plutarch." Charles Knight holds that Shakespeare's Timon is neither the Timon of Painter and Barchley, nor the Timon of Plutarch, but approaches nearer than the commentators have been willing to allow to the Timon of Lucian. At the same time, Mr. Knight is of opinion that the Timon of Shakespeare is no ordinary cynic, "but one of the most striking creations of his originality."

As an acting play, Timon of Athens has enjoyed little favour; its hold upon the stage has always been insecure. "The curses of Coriolanus, Thersites, Lear, ring through the play, and no glorious figures of Volumnia, Cordelia, rise to relieve its gloom," writes Mr. Furnivall, who further notes that the female characters, "except the unnamed ladies who dance," are unworthy and disreputable, and that generally the drama is deficient in action and characterisation, and is unequal even in the portions which are admitted to be Shakespeare's. Schlegel finds that of all the poet's works Timon of Athens possesses most the character of satire, a laughingsatire in the picture of the parasites and flatterers, and Juvenalian in the bitterness of Timon's maledictions on the ingratitude of a false world. The speeches of the hero are said to be "a dictionary of eloquent imprecation." The critics and commentators seem all agreed as to the simplicity and the slightness of the fable, which consists only of a single event, and pretends to little dramatic interest. Hallam wonders that Shakespeare should have seen in the single delineation of Timon a counter-balance for the manifold objections to the subject, and discovers a period in the poet's life "when his heart was ill at ease and ill-content with the world or his own conscience; the memory of hours mispent, the pangs of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worse nature, which intercourse with unworthy associates, by choice or circumstance, peculiarly teaches; these, as they sank into the depths of his great mind, seem not only to have inspired into it the conceptions of Lear and Timon, but that of one primary character, the censurer of mankind."

In 1678, at the Dorset Garden Theatre, was represented Timon of Athens, or The Man Hater, an alteration by Shadwell of the original play. Downes records of this production that it was very well acted and the music in it well performed; "it wonderfully pleased the court and city, being

an excellent moral." It may be gathered, however, from the epilogue to *The Jew of Venice*, Lord Lansdowne's adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1701, that the success of Shadwell's version of *Timon* was due chiefly to the musical embellishments of Purcell, and that the unaccompanied speeches were disapproved :

How was the scene forlorn, and how despised,
When Timon, without music, moralized !
Shakespeare's sublime in vain enticed the throng,
Without the charm of Purcell's Syren song.

It is difficult to understand, however, why this allusion to a play produced in 1678 should occur in an epilogue delivered in 1701. There may have been later representations of Shadwell's version of the play, otherwise to the younger play-goers of the time the reference to Timon of Athens in connection with Purcell's music could scarcely have been intelligible. In 1678 Betterton appeared as Timon, Harris as Apemantus, Smith as Alcibiades, and Medbourne as Flavius—or Demetrius, as Shadwell calls him ; Mrs. Betterton and Mrs. Shadwell personated Evandra and Melissa, while Thais and Phrinias, the Timandra and Phrynia of Shakespeare, were represented by Mrs. Seymour and Mrs. Le Grand. Melissa is assigned a confidant and waiting-woman, Cloe ; the character being undertaken by Mrs. Gibbs.

In his Dedication Shadwell professed to have made the History of Timon into a play. It was the fixed opinion of the adapters that Shakespeare's plays were hardly to be called plays until they had undergone systematic modification and mutilation. At a later date Cibber was to follow Shadwell and announce that altering King John he "had endeavoured to make it more like a play than he found it in Shakespeare." Genest says of Shadwell's alteration that it is "bad enough but not contemptible." Many new scenes and characters are introduced in the hope of fortifying the dramatic interest of the work. Timon is loved by a virtuous lady named Evandra, but he confesses to her that he entertains a decided preference for a certain Melissa. When his hour of adversity arrives, however, he finds that Evandra is still constant to him, while Melissa scorns him because of his poverty. When he retreats to the woods, digs, and discovers gold, the mercenary Melissa seeks a reconciliation with him, but he now renounces her love and professes his affection for the faithful Evandra. "This love business is

far from an improvement," notes Genest. Much injury is done to the character of Flavius, who is made to desert his master ; many additions are made to the character of Apemantus, who is described as "a snarling stoic ;" a new masque is substituted for Shakespeare's, and in lieu of warm water, toads and snakes figure in the banquet scene. After the death of Timon, Evandra stabs herself, the senators enter with halters round their necks, Alcibiades harangues them, and concludes the play with a lamentation of the fate of Timon and Evandra.

In 1707, at the Haymarket Theatre, Shadwell's *Timon* was presented with Mills as Timon, Verbruggen as Apemantus, and Barton Booth as Alcibiades ; Mrs. Porter appearing as Evandra, and Mrs. Bradshaw as Melissa. At Drury Lane in 1720 the play was reproduced with a changed cast of characters: Mills, resigning the part of Timon to Barton Booth, now personated Apemantus ; Tom Walker, to be afterwards famous as the first Captain Macheath, played Alcibiades ; Evandra and Melissa being represented by Mrs. Thurmond and Mrs. Horton. At Covent Garden in 1733 Tom Walker was still Alcibiades, the parts of Timon and Apemantus being now assigned to Milward and Quin. It may be assumed that Milward's performance gave satisfaction, for he presented the play on the occasion of his benefit at Drury Lane, seven years later, his *Timon* being again supported by the Apemantus of Quin. Alcibiades was undertaken by William Mills—not the same actor be it noted as the Mills who appeared as Timon and Apemantus in 1707 and 1720. Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Pritchard represented Evandra and Melissa respectively. Timon of Athens was again played in 1745 at Covent Garden for the benefit of an actor named Hale, who probably played the hero with Quin for his Apemantus and Mrs. Pritchard for his Evandra. It seems to have been usual at this time to allot the characters of the Poet and the Painter to the comic performers of the theatre. In 1745, Theophilus Cibber played the Poet ; the part having previously been assumed by Woodward, Pinkethman, Norris, and others. Apparently Shadwell's edition of the play was not again presented after this performance in 1745. Timon was absent from the stage until 1771 when he reappeared at Drury Lane under the auspices of Richard Cumberland, during the management of David Garrick. It may be assumed that

Paroell's musical accompaniments departed from the stage with Shadwell's version of Timon.

In the advertisement of his edition of *Timon of Athens*, Cumberland expressed a wish that he could have brought the play upon the stage with less violence to its author and not so much responsibility on his own part. But he had added to the list of *dramatis personæ*, and, as he urged, "new characters of necessity required some display." To strengthen the interest of the story he assigned Timon a daughter, named Evanthe, and constituted Alcibiades her lover. Shadwell's additions and alterations he dispensed with, and Evandra and Melissa disappeared from the scene. Cumberland prided himself upon having retained "many original passages of the first merit," and he trusted that in the contemplation of them his own errors would be overlooked or forgiven. "In examining the brilliancy of a diamond," he observed, "few people throw away any remarks upon the dulness of the foil." He admitted that as he was accountable for the entire part of Evanthe, and with very few exceptions the whole of Alcibiades, he had much to answer for, and that he was further bound to make his new matter harmonise with the old. "With what degree of success this was done," he writes in his memoirs, "it scarcely becomes me to say. The public approbation seemed to sanction the attempt at the first production of the play; the neglect with which the stage has passed it over since disposes us to draw conclusions less in favour of its merit." But Cumberland's additions involved much sacrifice of the text. The banquet scene was much mutilated, the share of Apemantus in that portion of the play being suppressed. Two of the scenes in which Timon's friends refuse him money were omitted. It was justly observed that Timon's prodigality became the less excusable, and that he forfeited commiseration, when he was represented as the father of a daughter, and was seen to be squandering upon sycophants the wealth that should have been her inheritance. Lucius, one of Timon's false friends, professes love for Evanthe, but his ardour cools when he finds that Timon is ruined. Timon's fine soliloquy at the opening of the fourth act, and his scenes with the thieves and with the Poet and Painter, are wholly omitted, while his dialogues with Alcibiades and Apemantus are much curtailed. The fifth act is nearly all the work of Cumberland. The

senators appear on the walls and surrender the city to Alcibiades, who promises to spare all but his own and Timon's enemies, Evanthe interceding for the citizens. It is shown that the treasure found in the woods by Timon had really been deposited there by Lucullus. The house of Lucius is plundered by the soldiers of Alcibiades. Evanthe and Alcibiades seek Timon in his wild retreat. He is found supported by Flavius. They entreat him to return to Athens. He relinquishes his misanthropy, manifests affection for his daughter, bestows her upon Alcibiades, dies, and the play ends.

Cumberland was blamed for certain errors which, as a scholar, he should have avoided. He had made his Grecians too Roman. His Alcibiades had spoken of Minerva when he should have said Pallas, and Evanthe had mentioned her Numidian slaves. The concluding incidents of the play were supposed to occur near the Temple of Faunus. It was pointed out that the Temple of Pan would have been more correct. Genest holds that in one respect Cumberland's adaptation is preferable to Shadwell's. Where Cumberland retains the original text he does not tamper with it; he omits, but he does not wantonly alter; whereas Shadwell will scarcely permit a scene to pass unadulterated, he is for ever substituting his own expressions for his author's. "The great fault," writes Genest, "of both Shadwell and Cumberland is, that they give us too much of their own and too little of Shakespeare; while it is almost superfluous to observe that their additions contrast badly with the original."

Not that Genest's reverence for the poet was excessive, however; he was disposed to think that both Shadwell and Cumberland had improved the part of the play which concerned the character of Alcibiades. The *Timon* of Cumberland's version was the distinguished actor Spranger Barry, his wife appearing as Evanthe. Apemantus was personated by Bannister, and Alcibiades by a young gentleman named Crofts, "his first appearance upon the stage."

In 1768, Love, the actor, published an adaptation of *Timon of Athens* which had been represented at Richmond, but which does not seem to have been exhibited upon the London stage. Love's version of the play is composed of selections from Shadwell and Shakespeare with a very few additions of his own. He preserves Shadwell's Evandra, but omits his Melissa. Altogether the alteration was thought to

be creditable to the actor and preferable to the versions of Shadwell and Cumberland; "but he would have done better to have omitted Shadwell entirely," judges Genest. Love assigned himself the part of Apemantus, Aikin appeared as Timon, and Cautherley as Alcibiades.

No further attempts upon the play appear to have been made until 1816, when at Drury Lane Theatre, for the sake of Edmund Kean, Timon of Athens was produced, with certain modifications by the Hon. George Lamb. In his advertisement to the published play, Mr. Lamb wrote: "The present attempt has been made to restore Shakespeare to the stage with no other omissions than such as the refinement of manners has rendered necessary." It was admitted, however, that in the last scene some new matter had been interpolated, compiled chiefly from Cumberland's arrangement of the play. Shadwell was not laid under contribution in any respect. There had been much controversy touching John Kemble's dissyllabic pronunciation of the word "aches," in *The Tempest*. To avoid all question upon this head, the line occurring in the first speech of Apemantus to Alcibiades was printed as prose: "Aches contract and starve your supple joints." When "aches" recurred in the fifth act, in the line,

Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,
Mr. Lamb inserted the conjunction "and," to complete the measure and preserve the modern method of pronunciation. The third act concluded with Timon's speech, which should open the next act and be delivered "without the walls of Athens." There were other transpositions of speeches which seemed to be of questionable advantage, and generally it was thought that the omissions were excessive. The adapter, however, obtained much applause on the score of his discretion and modesty. His alteration was pronounced infinitely better than any of the former alterations. Genest, indeed, points to it as "a model of the manner in which Shakespeare's plays should be adapted to the modern stage."

Timon obtained seven representations only, and was not repeated at Drury Lane in any subsequent season. Kean's Timon was supported by the Apemantus of Bengough, the Alcibiades of Wallack, and the Lucius of Harley. Hazlitt seems not to have reviewed this revival of Timon. In his *Life of Edmund Kean* Mr. Procter dwells upon the undramatic quality of the work, and records that Kean was unable by

means of his own single strength to make it popular. "It is more a monodrama than a play. There is no one but Timon. All the other characters are simply persons upon whom his generosity or his wrath is to be expended; they draw him out, but do little or nothing themselves." Kean gave all the dialogue in the latter part of the play with prodigious effect; his retorts upon Apemantus and his curse on ungrateful Athens were made as fierce as voice and expression could render them. But it was thought that he did not exhibit the whole character. "We beheld in him the bitter sceptic, but not the easy, lordly, and magnificent Timon." Leigh Hunt accounted Timon's scene with Alcibiades as the finest in the performance. "We never remember the force of contrast to have been more truly pathetic," he writes. "Timon digging in the woods with his spade hears the approach of military music. He starts, waits its approach silently, and at last in comes the gallant Alcibiades with a train of splendid soldiery. Never was a scene more effectively managed. First you heard a sprightly quick march playing in the distance; Kean started, listened, and leaned in a fixed and angry manner upon his spade, with frowning eyes and lips full of the truest feeling, compressed, but not too much so; he seemed as if resolved not to be deceived even by the charm of a thing inanimate. The audience were silent; the march threw forth its gallant notes nearer and nearer; the Athenian standards appear; then the soldiers come treading on the scene with that air of confident progress which is produced by the accompaniment of music; and, at last, while the squalid misanthrope still retains his position and keeps his back to the stranger, in steps the young and splendid Alcibiades in the flush of victorious expectation. It is the encounter of hope with despair."

After this Timon of Athens seems not to have been again presented upon the stage until Mr. Phelps revived the play at Sadler's Wells in October, 1851. The admired tragic actress, Mrs. Warner, had terminated her connection with the theatre a few nights before, and it was judged perhaps a convenient opportunity to produce a drama which needed no feminine support. Mr. Phelps appeared as Timon, and was greatly assisted by the Apemantus of Mr. George Bennett and the Alcibiades of Mr. H. Marston. New and splendid scenery, dresses, and accessories were supplied, and the play was presented in strict

accordance with the original text. In the last act a panoramic movement of scenery was introduced, so as to show to advantage the march of the soldiers of Alcibiades and the change from the woods to Athens and back again. The performance was received with great applause, and Timon was played for a month and then withdrawn, to be again revived, however, in 1856 with even more painstaking and completeness than had distinguished its first production in 1851. In his *Journal of a London Playgoer* Professor Morley lays great stress upon the elaborateness of the performance: "Every member of the company is taught to regard the poetry he speaks according to its nature rather than its quantity. The personators of the Poet and the Painter in the first scene of the Timon, as now acted, manifestly say what Shakespeare has assigned to them to say with as much care and as much ease that they will be listened to with due respect, as if they were themselves Timons, Hamlets, or Macbeths. . . . Mr. Phelps in his own acting of Timon treats the character as an ideal, as the central figure in a mystery. As the liberal Athenian lord his gestures are large, his movements free—out of himself everything pours; towards himself he will draw nothing. As the disappointed Timon whose love of his kind is turned to hate, he sits on the ground, self-contained, but miserable in the relation from first to last, contrasting with Apemantus, whom 'fortune's tender arm never with favour clasped,' who is a churl by the original sourness of his nature, hugs himself in his own ragged robe, and worships himself for his own ill-manners. Mr. Marston's Apemantus is well acted, and helps much to secure a right understanding of the entire play." It is to be noted that the actor who in 1851 appeared as Alcibiades assumed the character of Apemantus in 1856. There has been no later exhibition of Timon of Athens on the scene.

TRUTHFUL PRESENTIMENTS.

"It is but foolery," is the response made by Hamlet to Horatio's suggestion that it were better to forego meeting Laertes if he felt ill at heart. Had he heeded "the kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman," he might have escaped the poisoned rapier thrust, and lived to cheat Fortinbras of the succession to the throne

of Denmark. That weird consciousness of impending misfortune which comes no one knows whence or why, is not always to be disregarded with impunity. "Presentiments," says Charlotte Brontë, "are strange things—a mystery to which humanity has not yet found the key. I never laughed at presentiments in my life, because I have had strange ones of my own."

Very notable men have had that doubtful privilege.

"What is the hour of the day?" asked Wolsey of Cavendish. "Something past eight," was the answer. "Past eight," murmured the fallen minister; "past eight, eight of the clock, eight of the clock? Nay, it cannot be eight of the clock, for by eight of the clock shall you lose your master!" Cavendish had not mistaken the hour, but the cardinal's presentiment was fulfilled for all that, for he died the next morning as the clock was striking eight.

When Abraham Lincoln's ministers met at the council board on a certain afternoon, they wondered what had come to their chief. Instead of lolling in his chair, and telling quaint and irrelevant stories as was his habit on such occasions, the President sat silent, with his head resting on his breast, as if he were cogitating some sad and serious problem. "Gentlemen," said he very gravely, "something very extraordinary is going to happen, and that very soon." "Something good, sir, I hope?" observed the attorney-general, eliciting the reply: "I don't know, I don't know; but it will happen, and shortly too." That evening he was shot. No such cruel ending came to the life of the great captain who so long upheld the fortunes of the South, but writing of his last hours on earth, Mrs. Lee says: "We had been waiting dinner for him, and I said: 'You have kept us waiting a long time; where have you been?' He did not reply, and stood up as if to say grace, but no sound came from his lips, and he sat down in his chair quite upright, and with a sublime look of resignation on his countenance, but did not attempt to reply to our enquiries. That look was never to be forgotten, and I have no doubt that he felt then that his hour was come."

Mozart's sad notion that the requiem he had undertaken to write for his mysterious customer would be his own death-chant proved as prophetic as Hogarth's serious assent to the jocular suggestion that when The End of All Things was completed, then would be an end of the painter.

Flechner's intuition was not at fault when it made him urge the sculptor, taking his instructions respecting his last resting-place, to set to work at once, as there was no time to lose; when the tomb was ready for the tenant, the tenant was ready for the tomb. Tom Sheridan, bidding Angelo good-bye with the remark, "I have twenty months to live," gauged the term of his existence to a nicety. Awakened from a sick man's slumber by the baying of hounds, and the uproar attending the pulling down of a stag in a neighbour's garden, sport-hating Millet exclaimed, "It is an omen!" and in a few days took leave of pencil and palette for ever. Not long before his fatal illness, Prince Albert said to the Queen: "I do not cling to life. You do; but I set no store by it. If I knew that those I loved were well cared for, I should be quite ready to die to-morrow. I am sure, if I had a severe illness, I should give up at once. I should not struggle for life."

Like every other French commander who has dreamed of turning Irish disaffection to account, Thurot was glad enough to turn his back upon the Green Island. As he paced the deck of the ship that was bearing him to France there was no sign of coming conflict afloat, yet something made him suddenly start, stop in his walk, and exclaim, "I shall die to-day!" Ere many hours had gone, three English ships appeared in sight. An engagement ensued, and the Frenchmen tried to board—an attempt resulting so untowardly that their commander ordered the colours to be struck. The first man who attempted it was shot down before he could make the signal of surrender; a second met the same fate; and before a third could execute the order, Thurot himself fell to the deck, shot through the heart, and his presentiment was fulfilled. Equal prescience was shown by an officer of the army of Italy, who, under the conviction that he was doomed to die at midnight, received the order to hold himself ready to lead a night-attack at eleven o'clock with "Better in arms than upon one's bed." Something occurred necessitating the postponement of the advance for an hour, and, while marshalling his men, he was struck down, not by a shot, but by apoplexy, expiring exactly at midnight.

The presence of Admiral Porter at the American torpedo station at Newport, in August, 1881, was made the occasion for a display of the powers of the most insidious weapon of war human ingenuity has yet

devised, the carrying out of the day's programme devolving upon Lieutenants Spalding and Edes. Experienced in torpedo practice, they had no particular reason to anticipate evil, yet the first-named officer, on leaving his lodging to go upon duty, astonished his landlady by handing her his card, explaining that he did so because he wished her and his friends at the station to know where to send his body if anything happened to him. A few hours afterwards, Lieutenant Spalding and his brother-officer took their places in a torpedo-launch, the former taking the oars, the latter carrying the missile on his knees. When the proper time came, Lieutenant Edes leaned forward to arrange the apparatus in the water. As he did so, the torpedo exploded, and the fragments of two bodies went up in the air. The boots of Lieutenant Spalding were subsequently found but little the worse in condition, although not a trace of the feet they had covered was to be anywhere seen.

"I feel as if I were fated to die on this beautiful river," said a young English actress, as she talked to a comrade on the deck of a Hudson River steamboat. A week later, going from Albany to New York on the Oregon, she was suddenly taken ill, and died off West Point, on the most beautiful part of the river she so much admired. Other players have had presentiments justified by the event, or the author of *Thirty Years in Gotham*, to whom we stand indebted for the following histrionic examples, sadly deceives us:

An American actor named Chapman, who was also a dramatist in a modest sort of way, found it so difficult to arrange the details of a piece, which he called *The Mail Robbers*, exactly to his mind, that he observed to a friend that the play would be the death of him. A day or two afterwards he rode out of town to survey the surroundings of the place where he had laid the chief scene of the drama, and was thrown from his horse, escaping with a bruised shoulder. Congratulating him upon coming off so lightly, his friend joked him about his presentiment, but the actor was not to be laughed out of his notion, and persisted that his words would yet come true. And so they did, though in a somewhat roundabout way. In a part he was then playing, Chapman had to wear a suit of brass armour, and the night being very hot, he discarded his underclothing altogether. The armour chafing the bruised shoulder some verdigris got into the wound and

poisoned it, and of that poisoning he died.

"Fulfil your engagements like a sensible creature," was the well-meant advice of *Mdlle. Louisette's* confidante, when that tight-rope dancer consulted her upon the advisability of cancelling an agreement to appear at the *Volks Theatre*, in New York, for no better reason than that she had a presentiment the engagement would prove a fatal one. Sure enough it was so. Her first appearance was her last. She went through the performance without a hitch, but as she was stepping from the cross-trees to the stage, her gauzy dress caught fire at the footlights, and before help reached her was so badly burned, that medical skill was of no avail.

There is nothing repulsive about a gold watch, yet when *Sheppard* the actor took one from his mother's hand, as her birthday-gift, he shuddered, without knowing why, except that he felt it was destined to bring him misfortune. He wore it, however, out of respect for the giver, and wore it for years without anything unpleasant coming of it. One night, when he was playing at the *National Theatre*, Philadelphia, the house took fire, while he was on the stage. *Sheppard* got safely into the street, and then remembered that his watch was in his dressing-room; unwilling to lose the memento of his dead mother, he went back to the theatre, and was never seen alive again. His charred body was found next day under the gas-pipes; the fateful watch was in his pocket. The actor's presentiment in tardiness of fulfilment resembled that which troubled *Mrs. Brownrigg*. As the executioner was doing the last office save one for the wretched woman, an expression of horror came over her face, causing the clergyman to ask what new temptation assailed her. "I have many times," said she, "passed by this place, and always when near this spot of ground a dreadful horror seized me, for fear that one day or other I should come to be hanged, and the recollection terrifies me exceedingly."

Well aware of her deservings, it was no wonder if the apprentice-torturer had a bad quarter of an hour whenever she came within hail of *Tyburn Tree*; her prophetic fears were born of a coward conscience. Such was not the case with the honest miner, who, talking to his wife of the dangerous character of the seam he was working, said: "Hennie, I'm feared if there should be an explosion, I'll be knocked

about worst." This fear impelled him the next night, when the dread of something happening was strong upon him, to return home once and again after starting for the pit, only to shake off the feeling and go to his work, and his death.

At an inquest upon the body of a collier, who was killed by the fall of a rock in a *Staffordshire* mine, his wife deposed that the night before the accident, her husband woke complaining he had a ton of rock upon his head; and so sure was he of some ill befalling him, that it was only by dint of much coaxing that she persuaded him to go to work. Before leaving the house, he bent down to her child, saying, "Let me have my last kiss!" To make the story still stranger, it came out in evidence that the news of the poor fellow's death had hardly reached his home, when a cousin, much attached to him, looked in to enquire for him, impelled to do so by seeing, or by thinking he saw, the dead man standing before him in the roadway.

Coming events, it is plain, do cast their shadows before—sometimes. It does not follow that presentiments are to be trusted. They are like dreams. Only those which are fulfilled are noted, and that by reason of their scarcity.

SONG.

THE girl sat under the beetling cliff,
Oh, the sweet singing out of the sea!
She watched the white sail of the dancing skiff;
She watched as it tacked and made the land,
She watched the sharp keel run on the sand,
And she thought, "He is coming to me, to me,"
As the sailor sprang from the gay boat's side
As it lay in the lap of the ebbing tide.
Oh, the sweet singing out of the sea!
The two sat under the great rock's shade,
Oh, the sweet singing out of the sea!
They saw the sunset glow and fade;
They heard the low waves' ceaseless chime,
To the vows that mocked at change and time,
As he swore by the steadfast tides to be
True and tender, through weal and woe,
And she blushed to the kiss he hallowed so;
Oh, the sweet singing out of the sea!
The girl sat under the cliff alone,
Oh, the sad singing out of the sea
And the wind's low sob, and the waves' low moan,
Blent with the passionate weeping for him
Whose falsehood had made the fair world dim;
And she sighed, "What has life left yet for me,
Whose joy is blighted, whose trust is fled,
Whose hope, like the rose, its leaves has shed?"
Oh, the sad singing out of the sea!
The great sea heard, as under the shade—
Oh, the sweet singing out of the sea!—
Its moonlit ripples soft music made,
And it sang, "The world with its smiles and tears,
Changes for aye with the changing years;
Come, mourner, for rest and peace, to me.
Take the lesson I give through time and tide,
Do thy duty, nor reck of aught beside;"
Oh, the sweet singing out of the sea!

IN THE GLOAMING.

A STORY.

"NAY, nay, lass, don't take on so about it, it's not for long we'll be parted; only a few months maybe or a year at most, and then when I come back chief mate of the Saucy Jane, we'll be wedded, love, and you'll be all my own for ever."

Living in the same village from earliest childhood; taught their lessons side by side in the same class at school; joining in the same sports, and sharing in the joys and sorrows which come in life alike to young and old, the boy and girl—they were scarcely more even now—had "grown up for each other," so the gossips said. But it was only since his return from sea in the summer that Frank had really found out how much he thought of his pretty neighbour, and had told his love to willing ears.

Now, alas! the walks and talks which had been so dear to the lovers must come to an end. To-morrow Frank must be once more on the ocean, and Bessie left behind must dry her tears and go on her daily round of common duties with the bravest heart she can assume.

And so, on this the last evening they would pass together, Frank and Bessie had wandered down to the seashore to exchange parting words in the gloaming, unseen by any eyes save those of the gulls which flapped lazily overhead.

"Come, cheer up, Bessie. A sailor's wife, and, if all goes well, that is what you'll be in another year, should have a brave heart, you know. The months will soon slip by, and we shall be back again before you expect us, depend upon it; so no more tears, love."

"It may seem short to you," sobbed she, "but to me, shut up all day long with grandmother, it will be weary work waiting, and I know I shall lie on stormy nights listening to the winds and fearing for you."

"As if a storm would be likely to be on both sides of the world at once! You forget we are not going on a coasting voyage this time, but are bound for the other side of the globe, and see if I don't bring back the very prettiest things you ever saw in your life! I should like my wife to have jewels and gold, and all the grandest things I can get for her."

"And she shall walk in silk attire,
And siller hae to spare,"
sang he in conclusion.

"I would rather have you, Frank, than all the gold, jewels, and silks in the whole world, and you know that well," was the reply, given with such an increase of sobs and tears, that for full five minutes Frank could do nothing but soothe and calm his companion.

He succeeded at last, and so much had they to say to each other that most of the lights were out in the village when at length the lovers passed up its quiet street, and grandmother was nodding in her easy-chair when Bessie entered the cottage, half fearing to be reproved for staying out so late.

But the old woman remembered her own young days and would not be hard upon her favourite grandchild at such a time as this.

So Bessie stole away to her own little room to pray for her lover's welfare, and when she fell asleep in the early dawn, it was to dream over again that she was walking on the seashore supported on a manly arm, and so vivid was the dream that it was with a start she awoke to the reality that the day of parting had come, and that in a few hours she and Frank would be separated from each other for months or years to come.

Brightly the sun shone down that autumn day, and the Saucy Jane spread her sails and fluttered her flags, as if she were a living thing and laughed at the bustle and confusion around her. Proudly she threw the spray from her prow, when, the last farewells said, and the final preparations completed, the anchor was weighed, and the gallant ship glided gracefully away on her distant voyage.

There were tearful faces watching her, and aching hearts left behind, but what of that? "Men must work and women must weep," and the everyday life must go on whether hearts are breaking or no, and so, ere many days had passed, the dwellers in the little port were going on in their ordinary routine, and the outer world was lost in the more absorbing interests of that inner world in which those who struggle and toil for daily bread find themselves living. There is little poetry, but a great deal of hard prose, in such lives as these.

Bessie and her grandmother were among these busy toilers, and cheerfully did the young girl work to lighten the labours of the old woman who had been all in all to her from the time when the child had come to fill unconsciously the void which death had made in that cottage home.

For on one terrible night, long spoken of and remembered, the fishing-boats had gone out with their crews as usual and had never returned, save as bits of wreckage picked up weeks afterwards on the shore, and two or three drowned men found lying on the sands wholly unrecognisable by their nearest and dearest friends!

And on that terrible night, while yet the storm raged and the winds howled and screamed, a life returned to God who had given it, and another life entered this world, and found for itself a home in the heart of a widowed, childless, lonely woman, who forgot her own sorrows while ministering to the wants of the little one who had come to supply the place of the dead.

The care bestowed upon this child of her child—the dearly loved daughter whose thread of life had been thus prematurely snapped—was doubly repaid to the old woman, for those tiny baby fingers soothed her as nothing else could, and she watched with more than a mother's fondness the first dawnings of intelligence in the face of her darling. And when, as time passed by, Bessie grew up to be the pride of the village, what so sweet to her grandmother's ears as the praises which the young girl's modest looks and conduct called forth from the neighbours?

Gladly had she seen the attachment between Frank and Bessie, feeling sure that she would leave her darling in good hands when the day came for the summons to that "better land" where so many she had loved had gone before her.

Already she called Frank her grandson, and looking forward to his return from sea, cheered Bessie, who in spite of her efforts to the contrary would have fits of depression sometimes, by talking of the bright and happy days they would all three spend together when he came back to claim his bride.

So days became weeks, and weeks months, and life went on as usual in the village; but Bessie took no part in the merry-makings with which the young folks beguiled the winter evenings and to which they vainly urged her to come.

"I don't know what's come over you, Bessie," they said to her again and again; "you used to be the merriest dancer amongst us, and now you never care even to hear about our parties. Just come this once. Surely your grandmother will spare you for one evening."

But Bessie only shook her head with a smile and declined.

"Grandmother could spare me well, she says so; but I couldn't be dancing with any pleasure while Frank's away, so don't ask me to come."

Truly it would have been no pleasure to Bessie to dance and talk with the rustic swains at these merry-makings, while all the time her thoughts were far away. She liked best to be alone, and whenever it was possible she stole away in the gloaming to the seashore, and went again in fancy over the parting words of her sailor lover, and longed for his return.

On many a stormy night, too, did she lie awake and pray for his safety, and glad indeed was she when the winter was over and the lengthening days of spring and summer made her look hopefully for the return of the ship.

"I don't think it's right for that girl to be moping so much alone, neighbour," said an old fisherman one day. "I meet her so often of an evening down by the shore, and she seems to shun all her former companions in a way that's not natural."

"She likes best to be alone, and as she is always bright and cheerful with me I won't thwart her," was her grandmother's reply; "she is a dear good child, and I long as much as she does to see Frank home again."

"Aye, aye, so do we all; he's a steady lad and will make the girl a good husband, and she deserves it, neighbour, that I must say. We all know how well she does her duty by you; not but what she ought to repay your kindness to her; but we don't always have our dues in this life, and it's a pleasing sight when young people care for and attend to their elders as she does. But still, I will say, if she were my daughter I'd rather see her a little more lively, like the other girls."

"Wait till we get Frank back and then see if she won't be merry again; besides, you wouldn't have her laughing and talking with all the lads as if she were not already engaged? You wouldn't have liked it, when you were young, neighbour, and had left behind you someone you loved, to hear that she was as gay as possible during your absence."

"Well, perhaps not, perhaps not; we must remember we were all young once, and maybe the girl is in the right so far; but it will be all the harder for her if anything should happen to go wrong with the ship, and we never know what to expect in a long sea-voyage. However, we won't be croaking like ravens and expecting the

worst; time enough when it comes, the Lord knows. Good-night to you, neighbour."

And shaking his head portentously the old fisherman gathered up his nets and departed.

"If anything goes wrong with the ship," repeated his listener to herself slowly and solemnly; "may Heaven help us if it does. It would just break the child's heart and mine too! But here she comes, and I won't be the one to put ideas of evil tidings into her head."

Yet though she smiled and talked as usual to her darling during the evening and entered into all her plans, the fisherman's ominous words would recur to the old woman and kept sleep from her eyes till long after the child of her affections was wrapped in happy slumbers dreaming of her absent love.

But with the bright morning sun came hope that all would be right in the end, and ere a week had passed Bessie and her grandmother alike were looking forward to the arrival of the Saucy Jane with equal interest and no fears for the future.

Summer sped on, each day saw a slight change in Nature's robe of green; imperceptibly she was assuming her garb of russet-brown, and the starry flowers in her crown were fading one by one to be replaced by autumn's richer, if less beautiful, harvest wreath of fruits.

Anxiously now each evening did Bessie watch for the return of him she loved. It was time the ship was heard of, so said all the pilots and fisher-folk who congregated each day down by the jetty, and telescope in hand scanned the horizon for strange sail, and told yarns the while of wonders seen by them and perils passed through on the great deep till their auditors stood open-eyed and agape with speechless astonishment.

Yes, it was time the ship came home now; she was overdue when autumn succeeding to summer was in turn giving place to winter, and heavy seas swept the Channel, and wives whose husbands had gone out fishing sat watching and waiting with sinking hearts lest they should never see them more.

"Time the ship came home!" Even the most apathetic roused up at last and wondered what had become of her. Yes, it was time that her voyaging was over, aye, long before this.

But there had been cyclones in the Indian seas, while a summer's calm rippled the wavelets on English shores; and the

Saucy Jane never came home, but lay with all her crew fathoms deep beneath the waves, to rest there till the sea gave up her dead.

Bitter tears were shed when the news, which was whispered about at first as if only half believed in, was confirmed by a sailor whose more fortunate ship had ridden out the gale.

Then, and not till then, was all hope given up, and widows and orphans mourned their dead.

And Bessie, was not she among these mourners? Faithful and true as she had ever been to her lover in life, did she not now bewail and lament for him dead, with bitter sorrow and unconquerable grief? No; though women and children burst into tears and mourned bitterly for those who would never come back, and even though strong men turned away with sobs and passed their horny hands over suddenly-dimmed eyes, Bessie's cheeks paled not, and no tears fell.

She seemed as though she heard not, as if she understood not what was said. With eyes, from which all expression had gone, she looked round her as if she saw not the grief-stricken faces of those who wept for their dead, nor the outstretched hands of her grandmother who forgot her own grief in terror at this deadly apathy.

"Oh, Bessie, Bessie, my darling child, don't take it in this way; it breaks my heart to see you look like that! If you would but cry ever so little it would do you good. Come and lay your head on grannie's bosom where you've lain so many a time as a baby, and let her help you to bear this sorrow;" and the poor trembling old woman put her hand on her grandchild's arm.

But Bessie unheeding it passed on to the seashore, and sympathising neighbours led the almost broken-hearted grandmother back to her now desolate hearth and strove to comfort her as best they could.

"Let her alone, dame, now; tears will come by-and-by; the girl's stunned at present, and can't take in the tidings at all."

"A night's rest will do her good; the poor thing was so wrapped up in Frank that she don't yet know what to make of the news."

"Cheer up, mother, and maybe it will all come right. You sit down here, and let my wife look after you a bit, and I'll go down to the shore and see that no harm

happens to the girl," added the third and most practical of these sympathisers.

"I thank ye all kindly, neighbours," said the weeping woman, "and I trust in Heaven to bring it all right, for this is the sorest trial that has yet befallen me, and I've had many of them in my time as you all know."

But in spite of all these hopeful words it never did come right in this world. Days passed, and Bessie remained in the same unconscious state.

The doctor was summoned, but all he could say was: "An evident shock to the system which time alone can cure."

And the rector who came on an errand of mercy to his stricken parishioners, was fain to go away without speaking the words he had intended to say, for before that dumb grief he was powerless.

Time has passed on since the day on which the tidings of the wreck of the *Saucy Jane* reached the sea-coast village, and the changes are many, but Bessie is still there.

Doctor, rector, grandmother, and all of that generation sleep the sleep of the just, and a new set of fisher-folk inhabit the old homesteads.

And on the shore, ever as the gloaming comes round, may be seen a woman who shades her eyes with her hand as she looks out over the sea and murmurs to herself: "Oh, Frank, my love, my love, are you ever coming home to me again!"

She is old now, and her once dark-brown hair is thickly streaked with grey, her cheeks are pale and thin, and her eyes lustreless, but her ever placid face still bears traces of the beauty which had been hers in youth.

Kind friends supply her simple wants, and Bessie is well cared for, and is a favourite with the children who look upon her as quite one of themselves, asking her to join in their games, and consulting her in all the little matters which concern and interest them; and in the summer she may be seen the centre of a happy group weaving daisy-chains, or telling the hour by the thistle-down as they sit on the cliffs, herself the most childlike of the little company, with no thought for anything but the present moment and its pleasures.

She seldom speaks, and never refers to the past. All her youthful life seems blotted out as if it had never existed.

Frank's name alone remains in her mind of all those she formerly knew, and his name is only repeated when in her lonely wander-

ings she pauses in the gloaming on the shore of that mighty ocean over which her sailor lover sailed away one autumn morning never to return.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER IV. THE ANGEL ON THE THRESHOLD.

THE moonlight which shone so sweet and fair on Becklington market-place, paving it with silver, touched also into unreal and fairy beauty the pine-trees that gathered round the White House, a many-gabled, ivy-mantled building which ought surely to have been called the Green House instead, for rose, and clematis, and wistaria had so wrought for it a dainty brodered robe of leaf and flower, that its walls were hardly visible except very high up in the pointed gables, where the white might be seen crossed by heavy black beams, after a picturesque fashion more general then than now.

The White House was no pretentious mansion; its highest ambition may be said to have been comfort combined with homely beauty of well-wooded surroundings, gardens and meadow-land.

It stood about the space of two miles from the town, counting by the road; and half a mile or so less by the river, which in one of its fantastic turnings cut off an angle.

The garden lay to the road; from the back of the house a slope of green led to the river, ending in a light rail and a gateway.

Here in summer-time was rich store of yellow iris to be found, rearing golden heads from amid blue-green flags, and showing, ever so far down, faint golden reflections like flecks of sunshine. Forget-me-nots, too, lurked by the water's edge, almost touching the ripples as they passed.

Such was the home of Geoffrey Stirling.

There, in the years that were past, had fair flowers of hope, fair dreams of joy, budded but to fade; decay forerunning fruition. There had Geoffrey Stirling learnt that life was not, for him, fated to be a realisation of passionate desire, but rather a lesson of self-discipline.

He grew habituated to the voice of complaining and discontent, to the constant repetition of self-pitying lamentation; a kind of domestic dropping-water well calculated

to wear away the sternest powers of endurance.

This home of his was a pretty, cosy nest of a place. In its garden were neither squares and ovals, nor yet long narrow lines of massed flowers, as is the fashion in this day; rather did each plant grow at its own sweet will, and Nature, who never makes a mistake or brings about a discord of tints, had it all her own way.

"Let 'em gang as they've a moind," old Jeremy, the head man, boatman, and general factotum at the White House, used to say, alluding to the shrubs and plants in the long rambling borders; "and they'll mak' a posy fit for a queen."

So golden rods, evening primroses, and tapering lupins grew into untidy but picturesque tangles, and the great cabbage-roses thrust their pink faces up among the rest; gigantic posies flourished here and there and everywhere, and Jeremy did just as much, or as little—oftenest the last—as seemed good unto him.

In truth this course of conduct was adopted by most of the servants at the White House, that household spur to energy, the overlooking eye of a mistress, being a thing that the domestic kingdom lacked. How can any woman be for ever dwelling upon this ailment or that, fancied or otherwise, and yet look well to the cares of her household?

Dr. Turtle, coming down the winding gravel sweep which led from the house to the road, had oftentimes been seen to shake his head, inhale an immense long-drawn pinch of snuff, and then shake his head again.

He had an idea that if the house chanced to take fire, and Madam Geoffrey had to jump up off her couch and run for her life, it would do her good, but he was both too politic and too polite to say so.

When he sometimes looked in of a summer's evening and saw the house-master, tired with his day's work in the counting-house, lying back in his chair with little Ralph squatted on a stool by his side, quiet over a picture-book, yet with loving watchful eyes observant of the dark weary face of the father he loved with such a strange unchildlike passion of great tenderness, the doctor would inspire from the silver-lidded box again, thinking the while that the domestic music at the White House had about it too much of the duet and too little of the trio.

Dr. Turtle was not a particular favourite with Mrs. Geoffrey. She said he had no

power of sympathy, and occasionally a sharpness of manner that was irritating to the patient and apt to raise the pulse and cause palpitation.

That so urbane a person as Dr. Turtle could now and again be betrayed into a passing abruptness of manner spoke volumes for the provocation he received: it also said much for the lady's husband, who, to use Nurse Prettyman's own words, "was as kind and tender to the poor mistress as if she were a sick lamb and him the shepherd o' the flock."

Nurse Prettyman was a person of consequence at the White House. She it was to whom Master Ralph flew for comfort in all his baby-troubles. It was her hand that placed a "beaupot" on the table in the master's room, because he loved to have flowers about him; her care that watched over and nursed him when, on rare occasions, he fell ill.

If the right person will not do things, then someone else must, and the someone else who did most things at the White House was Nurse Prettyman.

She was a buxom motherly woman, well on in what is called middle age. She was knowledgeable in the art of knitting—indeed, it was supposed that in the delicate operation of "turning a heel" she had no equal.

She always wore a small sheath buckled to her left side, and in this sheath one knitting-pin was wont to rest while the other went click, click against it, as the stocking grew.

Nurse Prettyman would walk about the garden scolding Jeremy, knitting all the time; she would watch little Ralph at play, and all the time those busy shining pins were never still. The child looked upon them and their results as integral parts of her individuality, as if his dear old nurse were a kind of tree whose natural fruit was stockings and comforters, and all such woolly and useful gear.

Mrs. Prettyman had a comely face, rosy-cheeked and grey-eyed; she wore a great mob-cap, and a garment called a tippet over her ample shoulders; treated her mistress like a spoilt child; made a young idol of "Master Ralph;" and looked to the master's comfort in a hundred little ways of which perhaps he would only have become conscious had he missed them.

It was this invaluable woman who, on the morning of that eventful day already chronicled, tapped softly at Geoffrey Stirling's door to say that a messenger

had come from the bank in hot haste laden with an urgent message, to be delivered to his ear alone; had knocked again more loudly, and then, receiving no answer, had ventured in, to find him sleeping with his head upon his arm and a tired white face turned to the light from the window, that was shining full upon him, yet had not broken in upon his slumber—the heavy dreamless rest of one who has been ill and is reaching convalescence.

"What is it?" he said, opening slow dark eyes upon the figure by his bed. "Is your mistress worse?" and as the words passed his lips he grew all alert, sitting up quickly and pushing back the tangled grey-lined locks from his brow.

Throughout all that day did Nurse Prettyman at intervals bemoan herself in that she had had to rouse her master from that sweet refreshing sleep—"a better cure than all the medicines in Dr. Turtle's surgery for a man as weak as water, and little fit to be worried about business and such-like," said the dame, tossing her head in scornful defiance of all bank clerks and messengers, with Anthony Geddes at the head of them.

As to Mrs. Geoffrey, no sooner did she understand that something was amiss than she went into strong hysterics, had the blind in her room lowered, and ordered a dish of white wine whey to be prepared without delay—that condiment being supposed to be a "supporting" kind of thing.

"Why, if the master was dead you couldn't take on worse," said Nurse Prettyman; "and there's Master Ralph half frightened out of his little senses!"

The child, with great grave eyes, was watching his mother, and wondering what might be the trouble she raved of—the trouble that had fallen on the head of his father, and caused him to look so strange, and forget to kiss his boy, as he drove off in the gig, hardly giving poor old Jeremy time to scramble up behind.

Only seven years of life had passed over Ralph's curly pate, but that strange and close companionship between himself and his father, of which mention has already been made, together with the fact of his being an only child, had made him over-thoughtful for his age, like a fruit that ripens before its time in artificial warmth. He was a wonderfully helpful little fellow, too! One would almost have thought, watching him, that with his tiny hands he was trying to help his father bear the

burden of life, weighted as it was with a foolish woman's selfish fancies.

The child, too, had a certain pride in his mother's faded prettiness that was a reflex of his father's gentle bearing towards her.

"Daddy and I have to take care of you, you know, mamma," he would say with a wise and wistful look upon his face, thus recognising the close partnership in responsibility that is the outcome of a great love.

In like fashion, this new trouble, whatever it was, pressed upon Ralph as well as on his sire.

The child wandered about disconsolate. He did not care to see the pigeons fed, though he saw cook passing into the yard with a shallow basket of corn upon her arm. He did not care to play with the tawny setter-pup, who came blundering along on soft yellow paws many sizes too big for him, and even lay down on his back in the grass with all the four of them in air, to attract his young master's attention, in vain.

Something was wrong with father; something worse even than being ill, and lying still with Ralph sitting beside him in case he might want anything. What then did it signify whether the pigeons had their dinner or not, and why did the pup want to romp and play just as if nothing were the matter?

When father came home, much later than usual—and looking, oh, so pale and wearied—Dr. Turtle came with him. Ralph, from the ambush of the squat dark oak balustrades that ran across the nursery landing, saw them come in together. He heard the doctor say, twice over, "Now, my very dear sir; now, my dear sir," saw him take a huge pinch of snuff, and then the library door shut upon the pair. Presently arrived the vicar of the square-towered church in The Meadows, a high and mighty functionary, whom Master Ralph, with the calm daring irreverence of childhood, looked upon as one to be held in high estimation because he owned the rookery behind the church. After the vicar, in a violent hurry, and wiping his forehead with a big red handkerchief, came Sir Roland Ashby, of Dale End, together with his son—this last a personage whom Ralph had once seen coming out of his father's room looking very odd, and either as if he were just going to cry or had been crying, the boy couldn't tell which.

Then came the sound of many voices

through closed doors, Sir Roland Ashby's louder than the rest. Ralph thought he seemed to be scolding somebody very hard indeed; his son, perhaps. Nurse Prettyman had said one day when the young heir to Dale End was riding by on his prancing grey mare, that he was "a bad fellow." Maybe he had been bad now, and that was why the squire was bawling. Anyway, Ralph thought the squire's son a fine sight to see, with his fair curly locks, and white beaver hat curled up at the sides, with his tight pantaloons and long-skirted coat, and the jewel that shone like a star in his satin cravat—even if he was naughty sometimes. It seemed, too, as if Sir Roland was determined to be very severe upon this particular occasion, for Ralph heard him bellow forth a resolve to have somebody "shot," and "see if he didn't—sharp's the word too," and who could it be except the wearer of the curly-brimmed hat and gleaming breast-pin? Ralph thought Sir Roland was a very cruel old man, and drew quite a long sigh over the matter, so impressed was he; but this and all else was quickly driven from his mind when he crept downstairs—strangely unnoticed, for a wonder, in the household—and out into the stable-yard, where old Jeremy was telling the story of the day's events to a select audience, and bringing himself so often into the narrative that it began to appear as though the whole population of Becklington had, to a man, turned to him for consolation and guidance in their perplexity.

"You're like a man who tells folk to pass through a gate, and stands there all the time, blocking up the way so as ne'er a one can pass," said Nurse Prettyman. "It's Jeremy this and Jeremy that until a body would fain think there wasn't a man in all Becklington wi' any wits in him except Jeremy Bindwhistle. It's other folk we want to hear about, man."

Poor Jeremy took up the cruelly broken thread of his narrative again, but not with the same unctuous gusto as before. He kept stumbling over himself, as if he were a stone in his own pathway, but, under the fixed stare of Mistress Prettyman's eye, hurried by all such impediments, and made tolerable headway considering.

He told of the tears that fell like rain down the poor old withered cheeks of Anthony Geddes; how he went staggering about from one open empty safe to another, fingering the rifled locks; how he bent above the smouldering heap that had once been

his cherished ledgers; how the boy Davey scarce once took his eyes off the master; and how Gaylad, the red spaniel with golden-brown eyes and feathered legs and tail, whom every visitor to Becklington Bank knew as well as the manager himself, kept shoving his cold nose first into this hand, then into that, but always returned to crouch at the master's feet, looking up gravely and wistfully at the white troubled face of the man upon whose devoted head such awful sorrow had fallen, swift and unlooked-for as the lightning's flash.

"Eh, but he's a clever beast, is Gaylad; he's more knowledgeable than many a Christian, and if the Lord would but be as gracious and merciful to him as He was to Balaam's ass, i' the days when wonders did abound, folk's yeds might be less apt to brast wi' puzzlement than now appears the likely dispensation," said Jeremy, slipping in his metaphor hastily, for fear of discouragement, and permitting a feeble smirk of self-complacency to see the day.

He need not have been afraid for the safety of those flowers of eloquence on which he prided himself. Nurse Prettyman was too far gone in troubled amaze to have it left in her to throw metaphorical cold water upon anyone. Her knitting-pins were still, and the rosy colour in her plump cheeks had faded several shades.

"Go on," she said, speaking under her breath; "what more hast thee to tell?"

Jeremy had a good deal to tell. How, so 'twas said, Maister Gabriel Devenant had gone "out of 's yed." How Betsy, Amos Callender's good wife, had had to hide away her husband's razor; and how Farmer Dale "kep' a stout heart," though, as everyone knew, all his savings were at stake.

At this stage of the narrative the interest deepened, if that were possible, for now the eager listeners (comprising by this time even the stable-boy, who lurked in the background, hoping that Jeremy wouldn't see him, listening with all his ears) heard of the rage and riot in the motley crowd; of hands lifted to fling stones at the windows of Stirling's Bank; of the master, looking fit to drop, as well might be, and him so sick this many a day. But brave, too, facing the lot of them, and asking them—praying them—to have patience, and—to wait.

"They'd ha' bin hard-hearted ones, too, if they hadn't a' gi' un his way, for he spoke so gentle-like, so confidin' as you might say, and so sad and sorrowfu' like—"

But here occurred an unlooked-for interruption to Jeremy's stream of rhetoric. Little Ralph, whose dark eyes had been fixed upon the speaker from the shelter of the doorway with its over-arching roof of climbing bean-trees, suddenly made a rush at Nurse Prettyman, buried his face in the folds of her dress, and shaking from head to foot with passionate yet restrained sobs, cried out "not to tell it any more," he "could not bear to hear of all those people being so sad and sorry, and if his dearest dad——"

Ralph could get no more words out, for the sobs choked them back, and Nurse Prettyman, catching up her nursling in her arms, bore him off, casting a fierce and wrathful glance across his head at Jeremy in going, as if he, poor man, were at the bottom of the mischief. Jeremy, crestfallen and amazed at his own discomfiture, began to bite his nails, at which ravishing spectacle the stable-boy's spirit uprose within him, finding voice in gibes.

"Thou got a nasty faa' that toime," said he, all one gleeful grin; "that cooms o' bein' so set 'oop wi' sound o' thee own clapper."

"How could I tell t' little 'un was hid amang t' bean-stalks?" pleaded Jeremy, aggrieved; "and wasn't it Mistress Prettyman, her own self, as set me on? Dang such shifty ways, say I!"

"Dang what thee hast a moind," rejoined the rebellious one, "but thee got a nasty faa'."

Then he went to bedding down the mare, whistling at his work as one who is glad at heart.

Meanwhile Mistress Prettyman carried her child upstairs, showering down kisses and terms of loving endearment as thick as rain upon the dark curls huddled against her shoulder; and little Ralph took comfort at last, or seemed to do so. At all events the sobs ceased to shake him, only an odd straggler coming now and again to the fore, like the last lagging drops of a storm that is past. True the child was very silent, and sat in the low embrasure of the nursery-window, with his chin on his hand like a little old man, watching the rooks fly cawing across the dappled sky towards their home; watching the sun's last rays kiss the pretty shining river; and listening to robin keening with his sad sweet evening song the falling of the leaves and the death of the flowers.

But then Ralph was never a talkative child at the best of times; he had spent too

much of his short life in his mother's shaded room, and been told too often to make no noise, but just be still and good "because mamma's head was bad," to grow into a romping laughing boy, full of fun and mischief as became his age. The lesson of self-restraint had been taught him with his alphabet: the lesson of an exquisite capability of sympathy by the passionate love he bore his father. And so it came about that while seeming to watch the rooks, and the sun's good-night, and little robin jerking his scarlet breast from side to side among the branches the better to emphasise his song, Ralph was thinking of the story Jeremy had told of poor Gabriel Devenant, and Farmer Dale, and all the rest who had had their money stolen away by some wicked thief.

Perhaps, thought the child, it was that wicked thief whom the squire wanted to have shot when he should be caught; and not the naughty beautiful fellow with the yellow hair and the shining star in his breast after all. Perhaps then, also, the squire was not cruel but only just, and one ought to like him, though he had such a red face and roared when he spoke.

Ralph's was a righteous little soul, and he wished to be fair to everyone, even to the squire, who was ugly to look at and appalling to listen to.

Ralph never went downstairs when his father and mother were at their evening meal. Mrs. Geoffrey could not eat if she was worried, and, besides, was usually a good deal fatigued with the labours of the toilette. The poor lady hardly ever rose before the day began to wane, but she loved her own faded beauty, and liked to be made to look nice for the evening hours, and to be told that she was still a lovely woman. She craved this sort of mental food from any hand: a foolish gossip looking in upon the banker's sickly wife to pass an hour away, who, having paid her dele of flattery, went away and lamented to others over the sad fate of Geoffrey Stirling in being tied to such a useless fanciful wife; or the servant who brushed out her long fine tresses: it was all the same. Flattery was the fruit Mrs. Geoffrey had a relish for, and she cared not what tree it grew upon.

Later on then, when the evening meal was over, it was the custom for Ralph to go downstairs to the library. First Mistress Prettyman brushed the square-cut locks tidily over his brow, and combed out the long curls that fell upon his shoulders.

Then he donned a pretty little dress of dark velvet, and a lace collar fine and deep; put on rosetted shoes, and softly betook himself down the low broad stairs, never failing to touch one favourite goblin carved in the corner of the dim old oaken banisters as he passed.

On this occasion the child betook himself to the library with all the thoughts of the past hour garnered in his mind. It had grown dark by this, and the candles, in bronze sconces on either side the high and narrow mantel-shelf, were lighted.

Between them hung a circular mirror supported by gilt chains passed through the beak of a gilt eagle. Ralph thought this mirror very beautiful, likening it in his childish fancy to a great round shining eye watching everything that went on in the room, and reflecting them in miniature, like little pictures. All round this room ran panelling of oak breast high; the mantel-shelf was of oak, too, and carved all over with griffins and goblins that were evidently nearly related to Ralph's particular friend upon the stairs. The autumn nights were chill, and a small wood fire burnt cheerily in the low grate, between the dogs of twisted brass on either side.

As Ralph entered, his father, who was warming his hands at the blaze, turned to greet him, and the child was so filled with sorest grief to see him look so pale and wan, that in one bound he was in his arms, with his hands knit about his neck.

Mrs. Geoffrey stirred uneasily upon the couch that stretched from the broad casement window to the fireside, and put her hand feebly up to her brow.

"Hush!" said her husband, catching the well-known domestic signal and answering to it promptly; "mamma's head is bad to-night, Ralph."

Then he gathered his little son between his knees, smoothed down the soft locks upon the boy's forehead, and gently touched the curls that hung about his shoulders.

"Mamma," whose head was bad—when was it not bad?—was a pale and graceful figure seen in the mellow light of mingled fire and candle.

She had been gently and pleasantly excited by the coming of so many visitors an hour ago. The squire had paid her a brazen compliment or two in his own thundering style. His son had once more impressed her as a man of elegance and fashion. She was glad she had dressed a

little earlier than usual, and so had been able to receive them. The result of these pleasant facts was a faint pink flush on either cheek that had not yet died away. She wore a flowing dress, open at the throat, with high frill standing up, and fine white lace kerchief crossed upon her bosom; the sleeves of this gown were full from shoulder to elbow, fitting tightly from thence to the wrist; her hair, fair and rippling, was raised above a high delicately-carved comb, and trained into endless curls piled over either temple.

As a design for the lid of an ornamental box, as a fashion-plate in a magazine of the latest modes, Mrs. Geoffrey would have been perfect. As a woman able to be a true helpmeet to a man, able to meet the day of trouble with him and for him with a brave heart and to give comfort when comfort was needed, she might be looked upon as a failure.

"Father," said Ralph suddenly, laying his two small hands upon his father's shoulders, and looking earnestly up into his face, "do you think they will catch him? Do you think they will catch the wicked thief who has made all the poor people sad and sorry?"

"Who has been talking to the child of these things?" said Mr. Stirling, putting Ralph aside with a momentary hot irritation of manner.

"I dare say it is Prettyman," said his wife. "Besides, Ralph saw me when I was very sadly upset—prostrate, indeed, you may say—this morning. I fear, Geoffrey, that I shall feel the effects of this shock for quite a long time. I was sorry not to get a quiet word with Dr. Turtle this evening, but that is the way with you men, once business matters come before you, you have no attention for anything else—you become selfishly absorbed at once. I have always noticed this to be so."

Ralph's question was still unanswered, but he did not repeat it.

He moved quietly to one side of the fire-place, and set to warming his hands at the blazing pine-knots, looking ridiculously like a miniature of his father as he did so.

Geoffrey Stirling had risen, and was standing leaning one arm upon the mantel-shelf with his head upon his hand.

Looking up Ralph saw the shapely hand tremble, saw the dark eyes full of troubled thought bent upon the fire.

"Daddy is as sorry as I am for those

poor people," thought the child, "but he does not like to speak about it."

For a wonder—a wonder indeed almost without precedent in the annals of the White House—it struck Mrs. Geoffrey that her husband looked both ill and troubled.

She rose from the languidly reclining position that was habitual to her, came to his side, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Geoffrey," she said, "I wouldn't worry myself too much about all this if I were you. I dare say it will all come right in the end, and, you know, doctors say that worry is at the bottom of half the complaints that exist. If I had taken to worrying about things I should have been in my grave long since."

He was very gentle with her, very grateful for her unwonted thought of him; sympathetic, too, when she declared herself, half an hour later, completely shattered by the day's worries, and obliged to retire to her chamber, there to have duly administered to her five-and-twenty drops of camphor-julep without delay.

Meanwhile little Ralph had stolen quietly upstairs, forgetting even to touch the friendly griffin on the way, so sad was he.

In all the sweet experiences of the years that went to the making up of his young life, when could he remember his father putting him aside, speaking with such a sudden change of look and voice, as he had done to-night?

Never—never. And now—what should he do?

Disconsolate, the child crept into the embrasure of the nursery window, that favourite post of vantage, and to him there came the setter-pup staggering on uncertain legs, scrambling on to his knees, crawling up his breast, and finally thrust a small cold nose into his neck.

Thus Nurse Prettyman presently found the pair; the round tawny head of the pup wet with his master's tears.

Being a woman of prompt action, she despatched the one to his basket in the corner of the wood-cupboard, the other to his bed.

"Be very kind to him," said the child, handing over the little dog to Nurse Prettyman's tender mercies; "he has been trying to comfort me."

"But whatever's been and vexed you so, Master Ralph?" said the good woman, looking at the wet dark eyes in some amaze.

"I do not wish to tell you: I do not wish to tell any one," replied the boy with a dignity wonderful in one of so few inches.

And Mistress Prettyman dare not ask any further questions. That was the way with Master Ralph; he had a trick of the hand and a set of the head when he was pleased to be a bit wilful that was his father over again, and which none cared to gainsay.

The terrible eventful day was over, and Geoffrey Stirling kept solitary vigil. Up and down, up and down the library he paced, his arms folded across his breast, his head thrown back, the hair tossed from his brow, his eyes gazing fixedly and defiantly at—what?

Thoughts that were as phantoms—thin air taking tangible form and shape. With these he wrestled as Jacob with the angel.

But Geoffrey Stirling's ghostly foes were not of heavenly origin; rather were they akin to the goblin-forms that grinned and mowed at him from the carven mantel as the firelight glinted on them, gifting distended lip and globular eye with life and movement.

Up and down, up and down paced the restless feet—weary conflict raging in the heart that beat so heavily in Geoffrey Stirling's breast.

All at once he stopped short, and drawing a long deep breath, leant against the lintel of the curtained window.

What ailed him?

A sharp quick shudder passed through his frame—the sort of deadly thrill that superstition tells us we feel when some careless foot steps above the plot of ground destined to be our last earthly resting-place.

His eyes seemed to sink in their hollow orbits; the furrows in his face deepened.

Some terrible, some sinister influence was about him, near him, wrapping him round as closely as the air he breathed.

Was it the room or the night itself that felt so stifling?

With shaking hand he pulled back the curtain, laying half of the diamond-paned casement bare.

His fingers had closed on the latch; he was about to try and breathe the pure fresh air of heaven, when, with a strangled cry he fell back, grasping the curtain convulsively, and with starting eyes fixed on the dull glass.

What had he seen there as he bent to the catch of the window?

A white face, almost touching the pane—a pair of sombre menacing eyes, dark and full of fire, staring back into his own.

"It was a trick of fancy—a mere trick," he gasped at last, passing his hand across his brow where the beads of sweat stood dank and thick. "The strain of such a day as this would have unnerved any man, any man, however strong."

He pushed open the casement, fastening the hook in its stanchion. It seemed to him, as he did so, that a shadow passed quickly between him and the moonlight, and was lost among the trees. But this, too, was surely but the phantom of an overwrought brain, for when he looked again there was nothing but the silvered grass, the wealth of gently-stirring branches tipped with radiance, and the faint far sound of the water sobbing against the boat by the gateway place. Peace seemed to be over all the sleeping world, and shortly from the tower of Becklington Church rang out twelve slow mellow strokes, each one vibrating and then dying on the quiet air.

Was that midnight chime the signal for some heavenly messenger, with angel face and tender pitiful eyes, to bring rest and peace to the troubled heart of the solitary watcher?

What was the white-robed visitant standing at the door, that had opened slowly, as if pushed by a timid and uncertain hand?

Was it in truth some unlooked-for supernatural guest, stealing thus unawares on Geoffrey Stirling's solitude?

Or was it only little Ralph, the white night-dress that fell to his feet gathered in one hand lest he should stumble, his curls floating on his shoulders, and a small white troubled face raised pleadingly?

At the sound of the opening door, Geoffrey Stirling had started and turned, drawing in his breath sharply between

his teeth, and staring at the child with fixed incredulous stare from under knitted brows.

Then, with that swift sweet smile that ever chased all trace of sternness from lip and eye, he held out his hand.

"Ralph, my boy," he said, drawing him tenderly to his side, forgetting for a time—or so it seemed—the strangeness of the child's appearance there at such an hour.

Was it the wraith of his own innocent childish days that the man watched so dreamily? Was it the fair presentment of himself as he had been long years ago, when first he learnt to pray at his mother's knee?

Ralph, troubled and awed by the strange steadfast gaze of the eyes looking into his, trembled, afraid of he knew not what.

"Mine dear," he said softly (it was a pretty trick of speech his father had taught him), "are you angry with me still?"

"Angry! Not I, my darling," replied Geoffrey, passing his hand across his eyes as one awaking from a dream. "But how comes Ralph to be wandering about like a little ghost at this time of night—eh? What will Nurse Prettyman say?"

"I don't know," said the child with a quaint air of regal indifference to that worthy woman's feeling in the matter; "I wanted to come to you, and I came. I could not sleep; I was all the time thinking of those poor people, so sad and sorry, and with no money to buy bread. You are not angry now, so I may say it—mayn't I? And see: I want you to take this, daddy. It is my very own, you know, so I can do what I like with it—can't I?—and I don't care about saving up for a watch any more. I want you to give it to them, and to say how sorry little Ralph is, and that he sent it."

Ralph had slipped one hand about his father's neck. The other he held up before him, and there, in the little pink palm, lay a golden coin—all his precious store.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXI. FLORENCE'S REQUEST.

THUS it was arranged that Florence should be left in Mr. Anderson's way. Mr. Anderson, as Sir Magnus had said, was not always out riding. There were moments in which even he was off duty. And Sir Magnus contrived to ride a little earlier than usual so that he should get back while the carriage was still out on its rounds. Lady Mountjoy certainly did her duty, taking Mrs. Mountjoy with her daily, and generally Miss Abbott, so that Florence was, as it were, left to the mercies of Mr. Anderson. She could of course shut herself up in her bedroom, but things had not as yet become so bad as that. Mr. Anderson had not made himself terrible to her. She did not in truth fear Mr. Anderson at all, who was courteous in his manner and complimentary in his language, and she came at this time to the conclusion that if Mr. Anderson continued his pursuit of her she would tell him the exact truth of the case. As a gentleman, and as a young man, she thought that he would sympathise with her. The one enemy whom she did dread was Lady Mountjoy. She too had felt that her aunt could "take her skin off her," as Sir Magnus had said. She had not heard the words, but she knew that it was so, and her dislike to Lady Mountjoy was in proportion. It cannot be said that she was afraid. She did not intend to leave her skin in her aunt's hands. For every inch of skin taken she resolved to have an inch in return. She was not acquainted with the expressive mode of language which Sir Magnus had adopted, but she was prepared for all such attacks. For Sir Magnus himself, since he

had given up the letter to her, she did feel some regard.

Behind the British Minister's house, which, though entitled to no such name, was generally called the Embassy, there was a large garden which, though not much used by Sir Magnus or Lady Mountjoy, was regarded as a valuable adjunct to the establishment. Here Florence betook herself for exercise, and here Mr. Anderson, having put off the muddy marks of his riding, found her one afternoon. It must be understood that no young man was ever more in earnest than Mr. Anderson. He too, looking through the glass which had been prepared for him by Sir Magnus, thought that he saw in the not very far distant future a Mrs. Hugh Anderson driving a pair of grey ponies along the boulevard, and he was much pleased with the sight. It reached to the top of his ambition. Florence was to his eyes really the sort of girl whom a man in his position ought to marry. A Secretary of Legation in a small foreign capital cannot do with a dowdy wife, as may a clerk, for instance, in the Foreign Office. A Secretary of Legation,—the second secretary he told himself,—was bound, if he married at all, to have a pretty and distinguished wife. He knew all about those intricacies which had fallen in a peculiar way into his own hand. Mr. Blow might have married a South Sea Islander, and would have been none the worse as regarded his official duties. Mr. Blow did not want the services of a wife in discovering and reporting all the secrets of the Belgium iron trade. There was no intricacy in that, no nicety. There was much of what, in his lighter moments, Mr. Anderson called "sweat." He did not pretend to much capacity for such duties; but in his own peculiar walk he thought that he was great. But it was very

fatiguing, and he was sure that a wife was necessary to him. There were little niceties which none but a wife could perform. He had a great esteem for Sir Magnus. Sir Magnus was well thought of by all the court, and by the foreign minister at Brussels. But Lady Mountjoy was really of no use. The beginning and the end of it all with her was to show herself in a carriage. It was incumbent upon him, Anderson, to marry.

He was loving enough, and very susceptible. He was too susceptible, and he knew his own fault, and he was always on guard against it,—as behoved a young man with such duties as his. He was always falling in love, and then using his diplomatic skill in avoiding the consequences. He had found out that though one girl had looked so well under wax-light she did not endure the wear and tear of the day. Another could not be always graceful, or, though she could talk well enough during a waltz, she had nothing to say for herself at three o'clock in the morning. And he was driven to calculate that he would be wrong to marry a girl without a shilling. "It is a kind of thing that a man cannot afford to do unless he's sure of his position," he had said on such an occasion to Montgomery Arbuthnot, alluding especially to his brother's state of health. When Mr. Anderson spoke of not being sure of his position, he was always considered to allude to his brother's health. In this way he had nearly got his little boat on to the rocks more than once, and had given some trouble to Sir Magnus. But now he was quite sure. "It's all there all round," he had said to Arbuthnot more than once. Arbuthnot said that it was there—"all round, all round." Wax-light and day-light made no difference to her. She was always graceful. "Nobody with an eye in his head can doubt that," said Anderson. "I should think not, by Jove!" replied Arbuthnot. "And for talking,—you never catch her out; never." "I never did, certainly," said Arbuthnot, who, as Third Secretary, was obedient and kind-hearted. "And then look at her money. Of course a fellow wants something to help him on. My position is so uncertain that I cannot do without it." "Of course not." "Now, with some girls it's so deuced hard to find out. You hear that a girl has got money, but when the time comes, it depends on the life of a father who doesn't think of dying,—damme, doesn't think of it." "Those fellows never do," said Arbuthnot.

"But here, you see, I know all about it. When she's twenty-four,—only twenty-four,—she'll have ten thousand pounds of her own. I hate a mercenary fellow." "Oh, yes; that's beastly." "Nobody can say that of me. Circumstanced as I am, I want something to help to keep the pot boiling. She has got it,—quite as much as I want,—quite, and I know all about it without the slightest doubt in the world." For the small loan of fifteen hundred pounds, Sir Magnus paid the full value of the interest and deficient security. "Sir Magnus tells me that if I'll only stick to her I shall be sure to win. There's some fellow in England has just touched her heart,—just touched it, you know." "I understand," said Arbuthnot, looking very wise. "He is not a fellow of very much account," said Anderson; "one of those handsome fellows without conduct and without courage." "I've known lots of 'em," said Arbuthnot. "His name is Annesley," said Anderson. "I never saw him in my life, but that's what Sir Magnus says. He has done something awfully disreputable. I don't quite understand what it is, but it's something which ought to make him unfit to be her husband. Nobody knows the world better than Sir Magnus, and he says that it is so." "Nobody does know the world better than Sir Magnus," said Arbuthnot. And so that conversation was brought to an end.

One day soon after this he caught her walking in the garden. Her mother and Miss Abbott were still out with Lady Mountjoy in the carriage, and Sir Magnus had retired after the fatigue of his ride to sleep for half an hour before dinner. "All alone, Miss Mountjoy," he said.

"Yes, all alone, Mr. Anderson. I'm never in better company."

"So I think; but then if I were here you wouldn't be all alone; would you?"

"Not if you were with me."

"That's what I mean. But yet two people may be alone, as regards the world at large. Mayn't they?"

"I don't understand the nicety of language well enough to say. We used to have a question among us when we were children whether a wild beast could howl in an empty cavern. It's the same sort of thing."

"Why shouldn't he?"

"Because the cavern would not be empty if the wild beast were in it. Did you ever see a girl bang an egg against a wall in a

stocking, and then look awfully surprised because she had smashed it?"

"I don't understand the joke."

"She had been told she couldn't break an egg in an empty stocking. Then she was made to look in, and there was the broken egg for her pains. I don't know what made me tell you that story."

"It's a very good story. I'll get Miss Abbott to do it to-night. She believes everything."

"And everybody? Then she's a happy woman."

"I wish you'd believe everybody."

"So I do; nearly everybody. There are some inveterate liars whom nobody can believe."

"I hope I am not regarded as one."

"You! certainly not! If anybody were to speak of you as such behind your back no one would take your part more loyally than I. But nobody would."

"That's something at any rate. Then you do believe that I love you?"

"I believe that you think so."

"And that I don't know my own heart?"

"That's very common, Mr. Anderson."

I wasn't quite sure of my own heart twelve months ago, but I know it now." He felt that his hopes ran very low when this was said. She had never before spoken to him of his rival, nor had he to her. He knew, —or fancied that he knew,—that "her heart had been touched," as he had said to Arbuthnot. But the "touch" must have been very deep if she felt herself constrained to speak to him on the subject. It had been his desire to pass over Mr. Annesley and never to hear the name mentioned between them. "You were speaking of your own heart."

"Well, I was, no doubt. It is a silly thing to talk of, I dare say."

"I'm going to tell you of my heart, and I hope you won't think it silly. I do so because I believe you to be a gentleman, and a man of honour." He blushed at the words and the tone in which they were spoken,—but his heart fell still lower. "Mr. Anderson, I am engaged." Here she paused a moment, but he had nothing to say. "I am engaged to marry a gentleman whom I love with all my heart, and all my strength, and all my body. I love him so that nothing can ever separate me from him, or at least from the thoughts of him. As regards all the interests of life, I feel as though I were already his wife. If I ever marry any man I swear to you that it will be him." Then Mr. Anderson felt that all

hope had utterly departed from him. She had said that she believed him to be a man of truth. He certainly believed her to be a truth-speaking woman. He asked himself and he found it to be quite impossible to doubt her word on this subject. "Now I will go on and tell you my troubles. My mother disapproves of the man. Sir Magnus has taken upon himself to disapprove, and Lady Mountjoy disapproves especially. I don't care two straws about Sir Magnus and Lady Mountjoy. As to Lady Mountjoy, it is simply an impertinence on her part, interfering with me." There was something in her face as she said this, which made Mr. Anderson feel that if he could only succeed in having her and the pair of ponies he would be a prouder man than the ambassador at Paris. But he knew that it was hopeless. "As to my mother, that is indeed a sorrow. She has been to me the dearest mother, putting her only hopes of happiness in me. No mother was ever more devoted to a child, and of all children I should be the most ungrateful were I to turn against her. But from my early years she has wished me to marry a man whom I could not bring myself to love. You have heard of Captain Scarborough?"

"The man who disappeared?"

"He was, and is, my first cousin."

"He is in some way connected with Sir Magnus."

"Through mamma. Mamma is aunt to Captain Scarborough, and she married the brother of Sir Magnus. Well, he has disappeared and been disinherited. I cannot explain all about it, for I don't understand it; but he has come to great trouble. It was not on that account that I would not marry him. It was partly because I did not like him,—and partly because of Harry Annesley. I will tell you everything, because I want you to know my story. But my mother has disliked Mr. Annesley because she has thought that he has interfered with my cousin."

"I understand all that."

"And she has been taught to think that Mr. Annesley has behaved very badly. I cannot quite explain it, because there is a brother of Captain Scarborough who has interfered. I never loved Captain Scarborough, but that man I hate. He has spread those stories. Captain Scarborough has disappeared, but before he went he thought it well to revenge himself on Mr. Annesley. He attacked him in the street late at night, and endeavoured to beat him."

"But why?"

"Why, indeed! That such a trumpety cause as a girl's love should operate with such a man!"

"I can understand it;—oh yes, I can understand it."

"I believe he was tipsy, and he had been gambling and had lost all his money;—more than all his money. He was a ruined man, and reckless and wretched. I can forgive him, and so does Harry. But in the struggle Harry got the best of it, and left him there in the street. No weapons had been used, except that Captain Scarborough had a stick. There was no reason to suppose him hurt, nor was he much hurt. He had behaved very badly, and Harry left him. Had he gone for a policeman he could only have given him in charge. The man was not hurt, and seems to have walked away."

"The papers were full of it"

"Yes; the papers were full of it, because he was missing. I don't know yet what became of him, but I have my suspicions."

"They say that he has been seen at Monaco."

"Very likely. But I have nothing to do with that. Though he was my cousin, I am touched nearer in another place. Young Mr. Scarborough, who I suspect knows all about his brother, took upon himself to cross-question Mr. Annesley. Mr. Annesley did not care to tell anything of that struggle in the streets, and denied that he had seen him. In truth, he did not want to have my name mentioned. My belief is that Augustus Scarborough knew exactly what had taken place when he asked the question. It was he who really was false. But he is now the heir to Tretton and a great man in his way, and in order to injure Harry Annesley he has spread abroad the story which they all tell here."

"But why?"

"He does;—that is all I know. But I will not be a hypocrite. He chose to wish that I should not marry Harry Annesley. I cannot tell you further than that. But he has persuaded mamma, and has told everyone. He shall never persuade me."

"Everybody seems to believe him," said Mr. Anderson, not as intending to say that he believed him now; but that he had done so.

"Of course they do. He has simply ruined Harry. He too has been disinherited now. I don't know how they do these things, but it has been done. His uncle has been turned against him, and his

whole income has been taken from him. But they will never persuade me. Nor, if they did, would I be untrue to him. It is a grand thing for a girl to have a perfect faith in the man she has to marry, as I have;—as I have. I know my man, and will as soon disbelieve in heaven as in him. But were he what they say he is, he would still have to become my husband. I should be broken-hearted, but I should still be true. Thank God, though,—thank God,—he has done nothing and will do nothing to make me ashamed of him. Now you know my story."

"Yes;—now I know it." The tears came very near the poor man's eyes as he answered.

"And what will you do for me?"

"What shall I do?"

"Yes; what will you do? I have told you all my story, believing you to be a fine-tempered gentleman. You have entertained a fancy which has been encouraged by Sir Magnus. Will you promise me not to speak to me of it again? Will you relieve me of so much of my trouble? Will you; will you?" Then, when he turned away, she followed him, and put both her hands upon his arm. "Will you do that little thing for me?"

"A little thing!"

"Is it not a little thing;—when I am so bound to that other man that nothing can move me? Whether it be little or whether it be much will you not do it?" She still held him by the arm, but his face was turned from her so that she could not see it. The tears, absolute tears, were running down his cheeks. What did it behove him as a man to do? Was he to believe her vows now and grant her request, and was she then to give herself to some third person and forget Harry Annesley altogether? How would it be with him then? A faint heart never won a fair lady. All is fair in love and war. You cannot catch cherries by holding your mouth open. A great amount of wisdom such as this came to him at the spur of the moment. But there was her hand upon his arm, and he could not elude her request. "Will you not do it for me?" she asked again.

"I will," he said, still keeping his face turned away.

"I knew it,—I knew you would. You are high-minded and honest, and cannot be cruel to a poor girl. And if in time to come, when I am Harry Annesley's wife, we shall chance to meet each other,—as we will,—he shall thank you."

"I shall not want that. What will his thanks do for me? You do not think that I shall be silent to oblige him?" Then he walked forth from out of the garden, and she had never seen his tears. But she knew well that he was weeping and she sympathised with him.

LIVING CHESS.

COWPER, who, like many another good man, would put under ban every recreation in which he did not himself delight, portrays the chess-player marching and counter-marching his host of wooden warriors:

With an eye
As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridged
And furrowed into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin.

Who, asks he—with a mind well tuned to contemplation—would waste attention on the chequered board? The poet would have endorsed Bishop Beveridge's argument: "Either chess is a lottery or not. If it be a lottery it is not lawful . . . if it be not a lottery, then it is not a pure recreation; for it depends upon man's wit and study, it exercises his brains and spirits, as much as if he were about other things. So that being on one side not lawful, and on the other side no recreation, it can on no side be a lawful recreation."

Neither bard nor bishop would have countenanced the good people of Darlington and Bishop Auckland in parting with their coin to see the vicar and school-master of Heighington play chess in Redworth Park; not with wooden warriors, but with boys and girls, attired in canvas copies of fifteenth century costumes, figuring on the turfy board as kings and queens, rooks and bishops, knights and pawns. Apropos of this novel device for augmenting the Heighington school fund, a journalist recalled to recollection Adrien Robert's story of a like contest on the plains of Barrackpore between the chief of the Thugs and a representative of John Company. Many attempts had been made on the latter's life, all of which proved ignominious failures; owing, as the adepts at assassination believed, to the protective powers of an old grey felt hat, the favourite head-gear of their foe. To obtain possession of this talisman, and so put matters on a more equal footing, the Thug leader challenged the governor to a game at living chess, undertaking to

supply him with men, at the charge of twenty-five pounds sterling per man, it being understood that every "man" taken on either side was to be put to death then and there. The governor promptly accepted the challenge, staking his old hat against the surrender of those concerned in the attempts upon his life. After playing for some hours, the Englishman captured his opponent's queen and actual wife, and then adjourned for luncheon, leaving the Thug chieftain in great perturbation of mind regarding his prospective loss, an anxiety relieved on his adversary's return, by the latter gallantly waiving his right of execution in the lady's case; an unlooked-for act of generosity utterly overcoming her lord, who, in consequence, lost the game, and handed over the stakes.

The imaginative Frenchman's game with living chessmen was not entirely evolved from his inner consciousness. An old traveller avows that the Kings of Burmah used to play chess in that grand fashion. Describing Akbar's palace at Delhi, in 1792, Hunter says the pavement of one of the courts was "marked out with squares in the manner of the cloth used by the Indians for playing the game called pachess. Here, it is said, Akbar used to play at the game, the pieces being represented by real persons. On one side of the court is a little square apart, in the centre of which stands a pillar supporting a circular chair of stone, at the height of one storey. Here the emperor used to sit to direct the moves." One of Austria's many Don Johns had a room in his palace paved with black and white marble after the pattern of a chessboard, and there played the game with living pieces. A duke of Weimar turned his soldiers to similar account, as did Frederick the Great and his marshal, Keith, when more serious evolutions were not in hand.

Some half-century ago a futile attempt to popularise living chess here, was made by opening the Lowther Rooms in West Strand—now known as Toole's Theatre—for the purpose. The floor was marked out as a chessboard, and men and women, dressed in appropriate garb, were always in attendance to serve the use of those who chose to pay a crown for the pleasure of playing chess under such unusual conditions. The players sat in boxes overlooking the board, directing the movements of their pieces. The taking of a man was always preluded by a clashing of weapons in mimic combat, before the

captured piece retired from the fray. One who tried his skill at the Lowther Rooms found the battling of the men, and their fidgeting about their squares, anything but conducive to the concoction or carrying out of artful combinations; while he was in constant expectation of seeing his forces weakened by some piece or pawn taking huff, and walking off the board, regardless of consequences. Neither players or the public took kindly to the new way of playing the old game, and want of patronage brought the experiment to an end in three months' time.

In 1857, Count Platen gave a grand fancy ball in the Hanover Theatre; opening it with a procession of magnificently arrayed living chessmen, who, the parade over, put themselves in position on a gigantic chessboard, to enable two mock magicians to test their powers, and in so doing afford much amusement to the company, who watched the varying phases of the combat with great interest.

Only three years since, Captain Mackenzie and Mr. Delmar played a game at living chess at the Academy of Music, New York. The stage was covered with alternate squares of black and white Canton cloth, forming a board thirty-two feet square, surrounded by a red border. The kings wore the costume of Charlemagne, their jewel-decked robes differing but in colour, one donning red, the other blue; their crowns being in one case gold, in the other, silver—or what passed for such. Rich dresses "of the historical period" draped the forms of the rival queens, and "jewelled coronets sat upon their graceful heads." The bishops wore highly decorated vestments, bore mitres, and carried croziers. The knights, wielding heavy pikes, were clad in bright armour. The rooks were distinguished by bearing miniature castles on their heads; and the pawns were represented by pretty girls of uniform height, in amazonian dress, and armed with spears and shields. The players sat on raised platforms with their chessboards before them, a crier announcing each move, and pursuivants conducting the piece or pawn concerned to its proper square. Captain Mackenzie first called: "Pawn to king's fourth." A dainty miss of sixteen, whose long black hair hung loose over her helmet, was led to her square, and when Mr. Delmar's crier also made the same move, the two misses, standing face to face, suspended hostilities for the nonce,

and exchanged smiles. The following move brought the captain's knight to the king's bishop's third square, and Delmar made a similar move with his knight to his queen's bishop's square. Delmar's fourth move was the capture of a red pawn by a bishop. Her rosy cheeks assumed a scarlet hue of mortification at being captured at such an early stage of the game, and as the pursuivant led her off, she pouted petulantly. The pouting was repeated on the sixth move, when Delmar, who seemed to take a great fancy to the pretty pawns, pitted a blue-eyed pawn against a red, and she, too, had to retire. The next move was another match of maiden against miss, and the queen's bishop's pawn of the gallant captain was the third victim. Mackenzie's tenth move, after fine strategic manoeuvres, was a capture of a blue pawn, and three moves later his bishop vanquished a stately knight. The panoplied descendant of Henry the Second, twirling his moustache, sought consolation among the charming prisoners behind the wings. On the twenty-fifth move Delmar made a brilliant sacrifice of his bishop, which proved unfortunate, the captain's thirtieth move giving him checkmate. Doubtless the loser found consolation in the fact that "the game throughout brought out very happily the merits of the various costumes."

THE READING-MASTER ABROAD.

EVERY rustic who has the least bit of voice thinks he can sing!

In like manner, every one who can spell words in four syllables, is possessed by the fallacy that he can read! His hums and ha-has and harkings-back are nothing. His cross readings, his skippings over a line or two, his stumbles at a hard word, or his swallowing it, are only slight flaws in his accomplishment. He reads; though it is difficult to say whether it is harder work for the reader who reads or for the listener who has to listen to him. But even supposing that he is able to transmute printed characters into vocal utterances without impressive or startling break or error, it is too often an unvarying flow of sound as monotonous and unmeaning as the hum of machinery. Is that Reading! It may be doubted. As a soporific, such reading will be administered with advantage. But so will the babbling gurgle of a brook,

which imparts almost as much information and excites quite as much interest.

Such readers, having no suspicion of their own shortcomings, but reading on and on in fluent self-sufficiency, are advised (if they have learnt French) to take up a little book, *La Lecture en Action*, written by Ernest Legouv  , of the French Academy, as a sequel and complement to his *Art of Reading*. Having taken it up, they will not easily lay it down before obtaining some insight of what will be to them a new revelation. Unfortunately, the work, from its very nature and object, cannot be easily translated as it stands; but its remarks and rules are quite as applicable to English as to French elocution, while its comparative estimate of the styles of different authors, as a guide to the way in which they are to be read aloud, supplies both an admirable commentary on those authors and a fruitful suggestion that the same mode of criticism, applied to English writers, will indicate the manner in which they are to be orally interpreted. Above all, it demonstrates how much there is, in every good author, which, at a mute perusal, makes little impression upon the eye, but which, read aloud, immediately strikes the ear.

One objection to a book like M. Legouv  's is that a reading lesson is essentially an oral lesson. How can it be converted into an ocular lesson? How is one sense to be taught by means of the other? How are we to reach the hearing through the sight? A written word is at the same time a dumb word. How can it be gifted with speech, and made to enter into the world of sounds? The objection has been met and overcome; by what method, will be learnt from *La Lecture en Action*.

For reading well, a first good rule which stares you in the face, is given. It is not the material recommendation that the young reader should hold himself upright, supported by the back of his chair, instead of leaning forwards, and so contracting his chest. Nothing but a little common-sense is required to perceive the necessity of a suitable position while reading aloud, as for any other bodily act. M. Legouv  's elementary rule is *Proper Punctuation*, which, in fact, is no more than the intelligent interpretation of a writer's thoughts, indicating the members, the construction, and the progress of a sentence, and making its purport unmistakable.

Spoken punctuation was practised long before the invention of written and printed punctuation. People who punctuate badly

when they write, will often punctuate accurately when they speak. The absence of spoken punctuation will make people utter absolute nonsense; as in the well-known hackneyed lines:

My name is Norval on the Grampian Hills.
My father feeds his flock a frugal swain.

It is difficult to read aloud, at first sight, complicated unpunctuated sentences, such as often occur in reports of speeches, and not unfrequently in newspaper leading articles. The omission of stops is mostly involuntary and unavoidable, in consequence of the haste with which the reporting and printing are necessarily performed. And it is doubtless judged that bad and ill-considered punctuation is misleading and worse than no punctuation at all—which is perhaps the reason why legal documents are so exceedingly chary of their stops. But every one accustomed to read newspapers aloud, will confess how glad he would be were the printer allowed time to clarify his columns by careful punctuation.

Punctuation, in reading aloud, gives short intervals for breathing, and thereby renders the exercise less fatiguing. He who punctuates, reposes on his way. Every comma, semi-colon, colon, and full stop is a halting-place where the reader can refresh his lungs with a draught of air. They are like seats on the landings of lofty staircases, where those who mount them can take a moment's rest. Moreover, they assist the articulation, and render the pronunciation both easier and clearer. They prevent hurry and the consequent confusion, which are the great defects of inexperienced or nervous readers. Punctuation also assists the emission of the voice. One grand fault in reading aloud, as practised in schools, is the monotonous sing-song maintained without break from the beginning to the end, which is equally offensive to the ear and to good sense. Correct punctuation applies a partial remedy. By cutting up the continuous chant into fragments, the pitch of voice is interrupted. The pupil is obliged to change his tone and recommence on another note.

M. Legouv   recently met a friend, well versed in educational questions, who said: "You are exerting every effort to introduce reading aloud into both public and private education; but are you not afraid that, while making your pupils readers, you are not more likely to turn them into actors? By actors, I mean readers who adopt, in their reading aloud, theatrical habits of

declamation, emphasis, and gesture, which might make them pass for comedians."

"What inspires you with that apprehension?"

"Experience. In schools, the distribution of prizes is often celebrated by recitations, in which a little boy or girl mounted on a platform, recites a piece of poetry, or perhaps a dialogue with two *dramatis personæ*. What is it that you have most remarked in those children? Awkwardness, inexperience, timidity? Nothing of the kind. It has been assurance, emphasis, conventionality. They often indulge in ridiculous outbursts of voice and exaggerated expression of countenance; their arms and legs are in ceaseless movement; they raise their eyes to heaven; they are no longer children, but bad comedians."

"All I have to answer," said M. Legouvé, "is, that the teaching of reading has precisely for its object and its result the correction of the very faults which you accuse it of encouraging. You confound two things which are absolutely distinct; namely, reading aloud and public recitation. One is the beginning; the other the end. Reciters are, for the most part, declaimers and actors, only because they are not readers."

"Try, if you please, to convince me of that."

"A glance at the two personages suffices to prove it. The reciter is standing; the reader is seated. The reciter's eyes are at liberty, free to look around in all directions; the reader's eyes are fixed on the page. The reciter's arms are likewise free; the reader has one hand occupied in holding the book, the other in turning over the leaves. The reciter has to think not only of what he utters and how he utters it, but of his attitude, his position, his physiognomy. For they constitute part of his delivery, and even have their share in the emission of his voice and the effect produced on his audience. He cannot even neglect the posture of his legs; for he knows that they are fully exposed to view. He is conscious of being looked at from top to toe. The corporeal personality, therefore, plays an important part in public recitations as well as in theatrical performances; and the reciter is all the more tempted to follow close upon the actor, because his object is the same—to obtain applause."

"Your description is correct. And I will confess that my principal complaint

against public recitations and readings by young people is, the choice of the pieces. Nothing will do but sensational compositions. Children are made to express sentiments above or foreign to their age and intelligence. I should like the first rule at such recitations to be that the reciter should have to say nothing but what he can know, feel, and comprehend."

"I accept your amendment, and maintain that public recitation, under those conditions, offers immense advantages. In the first place, it strengthens the memory. A piece must be learnt much more imperceptibly by heart, to be spoken in a mixed assembly, than in a school-room. Secondly, it strengthens the voice. A large room requires a much greater expenditure of sound than a small confined auditorium. It perfects the various details of pronunciation. Clearer articulation, more correct and precise punctuation, and better-regulated breathing are necessary to make one's self heard by three hundred people than by twenty. It develops critical taste. The desire to please, to touch, and to amuse, which is one of the reciter's duties, compels him to thoroughly study the beauties of a work, in order to render them appreciable by the public. The distinction between reciting and acting is clear. The young man who, while reciting a piece, adopts the actor's gestures and play of countenance, annoys us and offends our sense of propriety; we feel that he is wanting in self-respect. His art and object are quite different to dramatic art and objects. An evident proof of which is, that when a great actor recites a piece of poetry in private society, what is his great aim? To resemble a private gentleman. He suppresses all his theatrical habits. Gestures, physiognomy, attitude, tone of voice—all are subdued and softened down. He adapts his picture to its altered frame, employs his most powerful effects with great reserve, and does all he can to be an amateur."

As an example of the distance which ought to separate the reader from the reciter and the actor, an anecdote is then related of one of the most celebrated French ecclesiastical orators of modern times. Some fifteen years ago Pere Lacordaire was elected a member of the French Academy. When his reception speech was finished, he read it, according to custom, to a committee of seven deputed to hear and pronounce an opinion of it. M. Legouvé was one of the number.

Lacordaire arrived, clad in his white Dominican's robe, and with a gravity of physiognomy and manner which accorded with his religious costume. When the time for reading was come, he took out of his pocket a pair of spectacles, put them across his nose, and read his speech with a simplicity replete with power which charmed all present. They unanimously predicted a great success.

Next came the public reception. The new member entered. He began to read the very same discourse. Metamorphosis complete! In the first place, no spectacles. He was afraid that the glasses would dim the celebrated brightness of his eyes. He reckoned upon the effect of his piercing looks. In a preacher, this mundane coquetry seemed not a little out of place, and hardly raised him in his auditors' esteem. What followed, completed the disillusion. Evidently he had learnt his speech by heart, but had learnt it badly; and he wanted to appear not to have learnt it at all. He commenced by reading from his manuscript; but it was there that his spectacles, so disdainfully renounced, had their revenge. He followed the lines with difficulty; and as he raised his head from time to time, to allow his eyes to flash on the audience, he could not always find the place again. His finger, whose duty it was to mark the passage, served only as an imperfect guide. Hence, disagreeable hesitations in his delivery, vexatious mistakes in his pronunciation. Moreover, unwilling to lose his personal advantages, he brought to the Hall of the Academy all the action and passion of the pulpit. His declamatory gestures, his frowns intended to terrify sinners—justifiable perhaps in the vastness of Notre Dame and under the excitement of improvisation—produced a most singular and unpleasant effect on the occasion of a simple reading behind that little desk with its traditional glass of sugared water. The result was a misplaced melodramatic performance. The speech, which would have been good, had he been content to read it, was wearisome because he tried to act it.

An instructive and touching instance is given of the powerful influence for good effected by the practice of reading aloud. Some thirty years ago, Madame D. the wife of a well-known medical man in Paris, gave birth to a son, who was not only blind but exceedingly feeble in constitution. Any operation to relieve the infirmity was deemed quite out of the question. The parents' grief was deep, amounting almost

to remorse at having brought into the world such a poor afflicted creature. Henceforth, their only idea was to devote themselves entirely to his welfare and render his life as supportable as might be. When, the result of incessant care, the dangers of infancy had been escaped, their thoughts were directed to his education. To whom could they confide him? To a teacher of the blind? No; they would undertake the task themselves, and open at least the eyes of his mind. The father and mother became his self-appointed readers. History, geography, calculation, the first elements of science, were all taught by the act of reading aloud. This oral instruction continued for twenty years, and during all those twenty years, there never passed a single day without the father and the mother bringing on their lips the intellectual food which they had collected from all quarters and prepared for his use, with the same solicitude and the same punctuality as parent birds observe in providing nourishment for their nestlings.

Such an education abounded with difficulties. The fatigue of daily reading aloud for several consecutive hours, during twenty years, was no trifling physical difficulty, especially for a woman. The moral difficulty was even greater. A blind child cannot be taught so easily as other children. His intelligence can only be reached through one sense instead of through two. That single sense has therefore to be stimulated to do the work of two. Words addressed to the blind must not only be clearer, more precise, but also more forcible, more animated. M. D., consequently, turned pupil, in order to be the better a teacher. He studied the art of being able to read not only without weariness, but with charm, with fire, with persuasiveness. Besides which, a blind learner requires the greatest possible amount of substance to be administered in the smallest possible volume. He therefore confined himself to a careful selection of the most instructive passages and works to be read; so that, at the end of twenty years, reading aloud had completed three educations instead of one; namely, that of the child and those of the parents.

Singularly enough, what most interested this child, for whom the physical world did not exist, were facts relating to the physical world. Its laws and phenomena mainly occupied his thoughts. The father, therefore, increased the number and importance of lessons in that direction. Once, when

thieves had twice entered the garden by night, to steal tame rabbits, with the apparent intention of repeating their visits, the young man contrived an electric alarm which, communicating from the garden with the house, betrayed the culprits and put a stop to their depredations.

The weakly child had grown into a healthy young man. He was twenty-five years of age; his temperament had gained strength, and a surgeon, one of his father's friends, offered to operate on one of his eyes. The young man joyfully accepted the proposal. The operation was performed, and, a month afterwards, blindness was transformed into a sort of half-sight. He distinguished objects imperfectly, but he had a full perception of light and darkness. He could find his way about unaided; and, completing his education where others begin, he learnt to read. Finally, one day, or rather one evening, on being attacked by some ill-disposed fellows, he repulsed them in a way which proved that his fists at least were no longer blind.

This partial recovery of sight conferred, simply by itself, a most valuable advantage. But, thanks to the education he had received, thanks to the knowledge with which his parents had stored his mind, that advantage became an immense benefit. The acquisition of sight was for him the acquisition of talent and fame. Devoting himself henceforth to the physical sciences, he entered the field of discovery and rose to be an inventor. He succeeded in constructing a new pile, a dry pile, which has been accepted by the engineers of the *Chemin de Fer du Nord*; he contrived a method of electrically lighting the lamps in theatres and other public buildings; he founded a laboratory which employs twelve workmen who almost worship him. An Englishman has offered more than a hundred thousand francs for one of his inventions. The Electrical Exhibition ranks him amongst its distinguished savants, and the child so cruelly disinherited by nature will perhaps leave some legacy to benefit the whole human race. M. Legouvé justly thinks that these most encouraging facts deserve mention in a book devoted to the subject of reading aloud.

STRANGE STORIES OF THE SEA.

THE romance of the ocean is inexhaustible. Strange stories of the sea are for ever cropping up in the newspapers, to be as cursorily read and as quickly forgotten

as the most commonplace items of intelligence in the morning's chronicle of passing events, but for all that worthy, when found, to be noted.

In 1873, the schooner *Energy*, on her passage from Rarotonga to Tahiti, picked up a boat with a man in it. He proclaimed himself a native of the Pomurto Islands, who with three others had left their own particular island in an open boat, for a sail to another of the group, at no great distance from it. Before they had got far on their way a heavy squall took them unprepared, the boat capsized, and two of its crew sank to rise no more. Struggling hard for dear life, the others managed to right the boat, scramble into it, and bale out the water, but failed to secure any of the boat's gear; and so, lacking any means of propulsion, they drifted and drifted for nineteen days, a few cocoanuts their only sustenance. Then, either from madness or sheer despair, one of the sorely-tried men went overboard and was drowned. It was three days after this that the boat and its solitary occupant was picked up. Captain Campbell could scarcely believe it could have drifted so far from its starting-place in the time, the distance being no less than nine hundred and six miles; but on reaching Tahiti his ocean waif's statement was verified by several residents there recognising the man as belonging to the Pomurto Islands, and the builder of the boat identifying the work of his hands.

As is the custom of his kind, a young Brazilian negro went one morning to try his luck at fishing, just off the coast. The wind, setting in freshly from the land, drove the lad's raft a couple of miles out, then the trade-winds carried it and him still farther from his home. After buffeting with wind and water for three days and nights, the poor boy gave himself up for lost, when fortunately his raft was descried by the look-out of a Norwegian ship, and he soon found himself safe on board, to be kindly cared for, and, as one of her crew, become acquainted with lands he had never heard of in his native Brazil. Another involuntary voyager was Mrs. Davis, the wife of an American major, who, staying at Galveston in October, 1879, went with a party of friends to an island in the gulf to enjoy an evening's bathing. When the time for the steamer's departure came, Mrs. Davis was not forthcoming. Her sister had seen her up to her chin in the water shortly before, and it was supposed she had gone down. A large reward

was offered for the recovery of the body without any result, and the lady was mourned for as dead. Several months afterwards Major Davis received a letter from his lost wife, who had landed in New York, after a seemingly endless cruise in a merchant vessel, by which she had been picked up. She had gone beyond her depth while bathing, and floated with the tide for an hour, when her moans attracted the attention of those on board the ship as it passed out of Galveston Harbour bound for Brazil.

The steamship *Jacora* came to utter grief on Cape St. Mary, when her commander supposed himself to be several miles from that promontory. He was an experienced officer, and was puzzled to divine how he came to be so far out of his reckoning. Mr. James Oliver, of Fray Bentos, attempted to elucidate the mystery by recounting his experience in the same quarter in the year 1848, when on board the *Miltiades*, a schooner engaged in seal-fishing between Lobos Island and Castellos. About four o'clock one afternoon, when the *Miltiades* was lying some five miles from shore, in nineteen fathoms of water, a dead calm came on; but when, at eight o'clock, Mr. Oliver came on deck, he fancied the schooner was much nearer the shore. It was a bright moonlight night, and he was soon aware of the fact that, although there was no current up or down, and not a breath of wind stirring, the schooner was drifting landwards at the rate of a mile an hour. Calling his shipmates to his aid, by the use of the oars they succeeded in turning the bow of the vessel seawards; but again and again it swerved round towards the land, as if obeying some invisible but all-powerful agency, and spite of the efforts of her crew, the *Miltiades* slowly but surely drifted nearer land, until a light breeze suddenly sprang up and relieved the anxiety of the perplexed mariners by carrying the schooner out to sea. The curious occurrence was duly reported to the authorities at Monte Video, without anything coming of it. Later on, Mr. Oliver sought to enlist the curiosity of the British admiral on the station, but without avail; so he had to rest contented with attributing the extraordinary behaviour of the *Miltiades* to the existence of a magnetic mountain, and he set down the loss of the *Jacora* to her being drawn out of her proper course by the same influence.

In the autumn of 1867 the schooner *Explorer*, having a crew of two, captained

by John Waddel, left Chatham, Ontario, for Georgian Bay. Towards the end of November the captain arrived at Goderich alone. The schooner had gone down in a sudden squall, taking the crew with her, Waddel escaping in the yawl boat. His story was not impeached, and the money for which the vessel and her cargo was insured was duly paid. Then the captain took up his residence in Goderich, and became in the habit of taking trips to the north shore, accompanied by his twelve-year-old son, until one of them ended in the capsizing of the boat and the drowning of its occupants. Some years afterwards a fisherman discovered a schooner in about a hundred feet of water, near Cape Hurd, but no attempt to raise the sunken vessel was made until the present year, when Captain Jey, of Port Huron, undertook the task, and, accomplishing it, proved those who thought the *Explorer* had been wilfully lost were right in their suspicions. She had been stripped of her canvas, and her cargo was represented by some tons of stone. Twelve auger-holes were found close to the keel, and the body of a sailor lay in the locked-up cabin.

If ships have been strangely lost, they have been just as strangely saved. The *Hortense*, from New Orleans to Massachusetts, was nearing the Florida Straits. Before turning in for the night, her commander warned the mate not to omit calling him at three o'clock, as they would then be approaching the double-headed Shot Keys, a large and dangerous rock. The night wore on. The mate went below to get something out of his chest, sat down upon it, and was soon fast asleep. The men on deck, thinking all was right, dropped off one by one, leaving a Spanish lad at the helm to keep a solitary watch. The wind changed, a stiff breeze sprang up, and the *Hortense* sped swiftly on towards the dreaded rock. The captain's terrier was on deck and wide awake. Rushing to his master's cabin, he jumped upon the sleeping man and woke him. Told to be quiet, Nep only barked the louder, till the thoroughly-roused captain thought he might as well go on deck. He was just in time. Right ahead lay the rock, and seizing the helm, he put the vessel about. Three minutes later, and the *Hortense* would have been a wreck.

In November, 1879, the steamer *Southsella*, bound for Port Said, had left Cardiff but a couple of days, when she leaked so fast that plying the pumps proved of no

avail, and she was obliged to put back with all speed. Upon a survey being made, a hole was discovered on her star-board side, and in this hole was an eel, fourteen inches long and two inches in diameter, evidently drawn into it by suction; an accidental intrusion for which the owner of the *Southsella* had good reason to be grateful, for had it not been for that eel, she would, in all likelihood, have sunk in her loading berth.

A perilous feat of navigation was performed by the captain, mate, and captain's wife of the steamer *Edgar*, when, every man of the crew being rendered helpless by sickness soon after leaving the *Senegal*, the skipper turned engineer, the mate fireman, and the captain's wife acted as man at the helm. The plucky three brought the ship safe home to England.

In 1872, a Boston ship was struck by a storm on the banks of Newfoundland. Captain Wilson had his shoulder-blade broken by the fall of a mast, and the first mate and part of the crew were at the same time disabled. No sooner, however, had the captain been carried to his cabin, than his wife, a woman of one-and-twenty, hurried on deck, told the men to work with a will, and she would take them into port. The wreckage was cleared, the pumps manned, and the gale was weathered. Then a jury-mast was rigged, the ship put before the wind, and in twenty-one days reached St. Thomas. After repairing damages there, finding her husband still helpless, the indomitable woman navigated the ship to Liverpool. Captain Wilson was never able to resume work, and for seven years his brave wife supported him and her child by working as clerk in a dry goods store. Then he died, and Mrs. Wilson was deservedly appointed to a Custom House inspectorship by Secretary Sherman. Such women are still to the fore. In a newspaper of 1880 was to be read:

"The brigantine *Moorburg*, left Foochow, in China, in October last, for Melbourne, carrying a crew of four, exclusive of the captain—whose wife was with him—and the mate. During the earlier part of the voyage the crew fell sick, and, one after the other, died. This left the entire management of the ship to the captain, the mate, and the captain's wife. The heat was frightful, and, as if there were not sufficient difficulties already, a leak was sprung; the mate was reduced to a skeleton, and almost helpless from sick-

ness; the captain was covered with sores, and his legs painfully swollen. The captain's wife, a small, and by no means robust woman, kept her health; and not only did she nurse all the sick in turn, and look after her baby, but she took the wheel in the regular watches, and did her share of seaman's work besides. The captain, in spite of his dreadful condition, managed to let himself overboard and stopped the leak; and so, at last, after all her troubles, the *Moorburg* got into Brisbane half full of water, with two sick men on board, and a woman at the helm. More than this, the gallant woman not only brought the ship safe into port, but her baby too."

Strangest of all is our last story of the sea. In December, 1873, the British ship *Dei Gratia* arrived at Gibraltar, with the *Mary Celeste*, an American brigantine, found derelict in latitude 38° 20' N., longitude 17° 15' W.; but without any apparent cause for her abandonment. The Admiralty Court ordered a special survey. The exterior of the ship's hull showed no trace of damage, nor was there any appearance of her having struck on any rock or ground, or been in collision. The stern, sternpost, and rudder were in good condition. As with the exterior so it was with the interior of the derelict. A minute examination proved conclusively that no accident had befallen her, and that she had not encountered very heavy weather; for the pitch in the water-ways had not started, and the hull, masts, and yards were as perfect as they well could be. There was not a crack in the paint of the deck-house. The seamen's chests and sundry articles of clothing on board, were quite dry; moreover, a small phial of sewing-machine oil, and a reel and thimble over it, had not even been upset. The harmonium and the rest of the cabin furniture stood in their proper places, the music and books scattered about had evidently never been wetted. The barrels of spirits, forming the ship's cargo, were all well stowed, and, saving one that had started, were intact and in good order. No bills of lading, no manifest, rewarded the industry of active searchers. They found, however, abundant evidence of the presence of a lady and a child on board the brigantine. The last entry in the log showed that at eight a.m. on the 9th of November she had passed to the north of St. Mary, one of the Azores; but, for divers reasons, it was inferred that she was not abandoned until some days later.

Why had the *Mary Celeste* been abandoned? A very terrible answer was suggested by the finding of a sword, appearing as though it had been stained with blood and afterwards wiped; and the discovery that the top-gallant rail bore marks of the same ominous character, while both sides of the ship's bows had been cut by some sharp instrument. The captain was well known in Gibraltar, and nobody believed him capable of lending a hand to the perpetration of any foul play. "Up to the present time," said the *Gibraltar Chronicle* of January 20, 1874, "not a word has been heard, not a trace discovered, of the captain, or the crew, or the lady and her child. It can only be hoped that by giving the utmost publicity to the circumstances, some light may be thrown upon them." The home press did its part in spreading the story far and wide, but as far as we have been able to ascertain, the hope expressed was not realised; and the abandonment of the *Mary Celeste*, and the fate of those belonging to her, are still among the many unsolved mysteries of the sea.

FREE FATHER THAMES.

THE first blow was dealt the other day in a controversy, which promises much interesting litigation to persons who take an intellectual pleasure in such things. They—the people, not the law-suits—are neither few nor far between. From the Widow Blackacre downwards, and probably upwards, there have never been wanting people so interested in the working of the laws that, in default of a suit of their own, they are never so happy as when looking on at the suits of others; just as a completely cleaned-out gambler at Monaco hovers round the tables and selects winning colours and numbers with unfailing accuracy, so long as he has not a cent to back his inspirations withal. To such inveterate lovers of the law-courts, the case of *Lewis* against *Layard*—recently dismissed by the magistrates of the Maidenhead bench—promises a rich harvest, for the Thames angler is threatened with nothing less than exclusion from his favourite river—that is to say, many thousands of people who love to take their recreation in the open air, and by the waterside, are menaced with the loss of that spice of sport which gives their holiday its zest.

I trust I may not be understood as one wishing to hark back to savagery, when I record my deliberate conviction that the men who are foremost in the work of the world are those who cannot make holiday without an excuse in either travel or sport. The *dolce far niente* is foreign to the strenuous English spirit, which abhors mere loafing without object of any kind. Those who know nothing about it, say that amusement, when reduced to its lowest terms, means chess-playing; and equally careless and superficial commentators have said the same thing of fishing. Anybody who has once felt and lost a twenty-pound salmon—it is astonishing how heavy the lost fish always are—is in a condition to hurl back the foul impeachment with scorn and derision. But in Thames angling it is no longer a question of salmon, although the trout seem to be increasing grandly. Salmon-fishing is a great deal like deer-stalking, grouse-driving, and pheasant-shooting. It signifies money. The national sports of fox-hunting and horse-racing are supported at such a price, that they are naturally the sports of the rich. Partridge-shooting of the older and less expensive kind—excellent sport when the stubble was long enough to afford cover for the birds—is rapidly vanishing from a country shorn by the reaping-machines now in use as closely as a sheep. The only excuse that the old English pointer has now for existence, is found in the impossibility of driving certain grouse moors, on account of their difficult conformation. At present, where there is no chance of driving partridges, they are "walked-up" by the shooter; in fact, every man is his own pointer. So a very handsome variety of the canine race seems likely to disappear from Southern England, where sport of every kind tends towards the artificiality of pheasant-shooting. As the long-tails are driven towards a certain corner, so must partridges be got together in a turnip-field, or actually driven past the shooters if any sport is to be enjoyed, for birds can no longer lie in the stubble. Every indication is in the direction of expensive sport, possible, under favourable conditions, only to the wealthy few. To the man of slender means, who cannot afford the costly paraphernalia of modern shooting, the only possible genuine outdoor sport is angling, and this is just now menaced with extinction on the Thames by a general

movement on the part of the owners of property on the bank or of the eyots, which, while they remain free to the public, are valuable as resting-places for oarsmen and anglers

The claim which has been advanced by numerous riverain proprietors, appears, if it mean anything, to signify a pretension to own the bed of the river. In its more insidious form it is called a right of private fishery, based upon mouldy parchments alleged to be of remote antiquity. Touching such grants of fishery as are alleged to date from the time of Henry the Second, it might perhaps be well to remind landowners of an incident in the years which followed the French Revolution. When the first storm and stress of the new time had subsided, a certain nobleman made his peace with the Government, and was permitted to return to France. His first performance was to bring an action for ejectment against the holder of part of his lands which had been sold to the peasant by the Revolutionary Government. The legal holder—so far as recent law was concerned—pleaded his parliamentary title; but the noble citizen addressed the judge thus: "I and my ancestors have owned the land in question for five hundred years." The reply of the judge was as unexpected as it was crushing: "I will hear no more. You and yours have had it long enough. It is time that somebody else had his turn."

Anything more foreign to English ideas of justice than this celebrated decision can hardly be imagined; but the perpetuity of property in land has of late been so rudely assailed that perhaps the worst argument that could be brought forward in a case interesting to the public is that of possession from time immemorial. It must be recollected that in all modern cases prescription is only a good plea when fraud cannot be made out, and that an outrageous infringement on popular rights cannot be made legal by what lawyers call "user" alone. And it is, moreover, a curious feature against the present attempt to oust the London angler from his favourite Thames, that the alleged time-honoured rights have neither been enforced nor attempted to be enforced till within the last few years. It was also pointed out by Mr. Layard to the Maidenhead Magistrates that because a person gave by deed what he imagined to be his right sixty years ago, it is no proof that the right ever existed or was in actual exercise at the time. It is a little

curious that it is only after this recent invasion of the angler's rights has been discussed at some length, that the real proprietor of the bed of the river and of all above and below it, is found to be neither the Thames Conservancy Board nor the Corporation of the City of London, but simply the Crown. This somewhat tardy discovery gets rid of a vast quantity of argument, so-called facts, and wire-drawn inferences. If the bed of the river belong to the Crown up to Cricklade, that is, so far as the river is held to be navigable, and only the administration of its navigation be vested in the Conservancy and the Corporation, it can no longer be argued that any part of the river is private because it passes between an eyot and the bank, when both eyot and bank belong to one proprietor. Such arm is without doubt part of a navigable river, and the right to fish in it belongs to the public, parchments to the contrary notwithstanding.

The arguments on which the riverain owners base their claim, albeit untenable, are too interesting in themselves to be lightly passed over. In this old England of ours, even when we acknowledge a portion of the ancient fabric to be too threadbare to endure further strain, we cut out the worn piece delicately and tenderly, and lay it aside reverently in a storehouse meet for moth-eaten banners and mouldy records. Even when we arrive at the conclusion that a grant made by Rosamond Clifford's royal lover is somewhat out of date, we never handle it roughly—unless it prove too great an obstacle in our way, when it is like to go the way of such things. But setting aside the more or less apocryphal grants of Henry of Anjou, the claimants to proprietary rights over the river Thames argue that their position is equivalent to that of owners of river-bank property where the stream is not held to be navigable. Where a stream is distinctly of the non-navigable class, and runs between banks owned by different people, it is held that the bed of the river belongs to each owner as far as the middle; and where both banks belong to one person the whole bed belongs to him, and in legal form all above and beneath it: that is, the minerals beneath the soil, the water which flows over it, and the air which ripples the water; that is to say, with certain reservations as to the enjoyment of the river by those other owners through whose property it flows.

Thus an owner of both banks cannot dam up a stream and convert it into a lake for supplying a town with water without the consent of those whose water he is cutting off. But bating certain limitations for the common good, such as that which makes it criminal for a man to set on fire his house standing on his own freehold land, the non-navigable stream and its bed belong to the proprietor of the two banks.

This appears to be the case set up by the owner in the Maidenhead case. Everybody who knows and loves the Thames will recollect the little eyot lying immediately above the railway-bridge. It is much nearer to the Berkshire than to the Buckinghamshire side of the river, and is the property of the owner of the house and lawn on the mainland, where some eel-bucks are placed. The length of time these eel-catching baskets have been endured where they are is a proof of the long-suffering of the public; but they do not affect the main question as to the proprietary right in the bed of the river. On behalf of Mr. Tyrrell Lewis, the owner of the house and eyot in question, the bed of the arm of the river between the lawn and the eyot is claimed as private property, on the ground that both banks are in his possession; at least, this was the argument brought forward at Maidenhead Petty Sessions. It is not contended that this rule applies when a river is navigable, and it would therefore seem that issue must be finally joined on the question whether the Thames at Maidenhead, and for that matter as far as Cricklade, is or is not navigable or common.

To ordinary minds it would appear that the matter is not worth ten minutes' discussion. Even if the restriction of "common" to "navigable" be admitted, there is obviously an end of the matter; for if a river which is actually navigated, not only by row-boats and steam launches, but by barges carrying freight, is not "navigable," what river is? The answer of the riparian owner is that "navigable" does not mean a river navigable only by means of locks, but is restricted to that portion of it in which the tide ebbs and flows; or in other words, that artificial contrivances for making a river navigable in fact, render it non-navigable in law. This, in plain English, is the contention: That the Thames above Teddington Lock is not a navigable river and the property of the Crown by reason of the weirs which have been put up to keep a head of water in

the river—otherwise, to make it navigable. Mr. Layard brought forward documentary evidence to show that the tide of the Thames originally flowed as high as Boulter's Lock, above Maidenhead Bridge, and that the erection of locks down to Teddington could, even on the tidal theory, hardly affect his right to fish where he did, any more than the erection of a weir and lock below Kew Bridge could affect the right of the public to angle between it and Teddington, by creating proprietary rights in the owners of the banks. All this is interesting from an antiquarian point of view, and perhaps to legal eyes valuable in this particular case, but what interests the public more nearly is the general issue as to the navigability of the Thames from Teddington to Cricklade.

There is a farce, in which Charles Mathews played charmingly, called *Trying It On*, which fairly illustrates the position of the more aggressive landowners on the banks of the Thames. While nobody was looking they tried how much the public would put up with, just as landowners elsewhere have felt their way gradually till they were strong enough either to get their picking and stealing of public property sanctioned by a private Bill smuggled through Parliament, or to plead sixty years' undisturbed enjoyment of their plunder. Such attempts at the capture of public property as were in part defeated in Epping Forest and are reported to have been recently made at Mitcham, at Malvern, and among the Quantock Hills, have been completely successful at a well-known village-green in Norfolk, and on the once common-land near Burnham Beeches, and in scores of other places. The method of setting to work was simple. The lord of the manor or two or three owners of adjoining property having come to an understanding as to the division of plunder first ran a rail round the village-green or common-ground to keep people from straying into the pond on dark nights. When this hand-rail had become a recognised part of the green, people and their cattle were warned off it, and finally the rail was improved into a fence, and the land built over or broken up for agricultural purposes. Protest was useless, as many a would-be village Hampden has found to his cost. Such a one would be first of all cut off from any share in the custom of the big houses in the neighbourhood and their servants, and, if he did not live in his own house on his own ground,

would certainly be ejected by the landlord or the parson or their friends. Moreover, he would be set down as a "bad lot," as a Dissenter, a Radical, and either a poacher himself or the associate of poachers; and would be driven either into goal or work-house, or out of that part of the country.

By the riverside the process has been not less ingenious and interesting.

What, for instance, could be more natural than for the owner of a field or a lawn than to consider the tiny islet covered with rushes and flowering aquatic plants, separated from him by a slender strip of water in winter and by little more than a muddy puddle in summer as his own property? It was not laid down in his deeds, and as a matter of fact belonged to the Crown, but that was no reason why he should not try to set up a claim to it. The instinct of rounding off properties and squaring fields is implanted deeply in human nature, and, where there is no opposition, asserts itself with irresistible power. It is too easy to block up an arm of a river only a few yards wide at one season and feet at another with eel-pots to begin with, and later on to throw a rustic bridge across. When these steps have been taken with impunity it is only a work of time to fill up one end of the strait which divides the eyot from the shore, to thus convert the strait into a backwater, and presently to fill in the backwater, put camp-shedding on the exterior face of the eyot towards the main stream, and thus capture it altogether. It is the same thing with fields through which a right-of-way has existed from time immemorial. It is easy to turn a bull into a field concerning which there is any doubt, easier still to put up finger-posts warning all persons not engaged in towing to keep from off it. Persons have, it is stated, been actually fined for insisting on fishing from a tow-path, which is, in fact, as much a public highway as the river or a post-road. Where the tow-path shifts from one side of the river to the other, the old ferry-boats have been removed, so that many a pleasant stroll by the riverside is brought to an abrupt conclusion. It is the old story of the wealthy teaching those poorer than themselves the lesson of combination to maintain their real or supposed rights. Anglers, who are supposed to be a thoughtful race, should not allow the lesson to be lost, but rally round Mr. Layard, Mr. Francis Francis, Mr. Crump, and other defenders of rights which give

enjoyment to thousands upon thousands of hard-worked Londoners, whose best—to use an Hibernicism—"playground" is a Free Thames.

BY WORKMAN'S TRAIN.

AT five in the morning, although not yet daylight, it is getting on that way. Lamps everywhere are turning pale, cocks are crowing, the rumble of waggon is like muttering thunder in the distance, while a bell faintly clanking from a distant convent reminds us of ancient ways in this wilderness of new streets and gaunt railway-arches. Now the night-policeman has relinquished his bull's-eye, and no longer looks with suspicion upon the wayfarer with a bundle, for everybody now abroad carries a bundle, and with that also a tin can. The bundle contains what is curtly-called grub, and the can, no doubt, cold tea, to be presently warmed up by engine-house or work-room fire. It is an extensive picnic, in fact. Everybody going out for the day—without much prospect of enjoyment, to judge from the moody faces revealed by the sulky morning light.

A little group of men are lounging about the station-doors, not yet opened, although the gas-light shines brightly through the booking-office windows. And we look at each other morosely, with the consciousness that it is Monday morning, and that we are in for another week's hard work, our pockets nearly empty, and pay-day a long way off. But a young woman appears—a young woman with a parcel—and the harsh expression in our faces is relieved by a certain mildness. The young woman is going to King's Cross for another train, and is doubtful of getting there in time; but everybody assures her that she is all right. The workman's special will be along in five minutes. And now doors are flung open noisily, and we file in. "To the Tower!" The booking-clerk hesitates for a moment, for this is the first train to the new station, and the first demand for a ticket.

But it is all right. A parti-coloured workman's ticket is handed out, instead of the sober self-coloured one of ordinary life; a return ticket at a fare refreshingly small. There is no examination as to your title to be called a workman. Get up early enough in the morning, and you are a workman to all intents and purposes. But at the same time

you assume certain disabilities. You must not return before five o'clock, except on Saturdays, and if smashed up by the company in transit, a sum limited to a hundred pounds only, is payable for the damages.

On the platform everything seems to blink sleepily in the strange mixture of daylight and gaslight; and as we pass over the tops of the houses, they, too, seem to be fast asleep, with their closely-shrouded windows, and chimneys that have not yet begun to smoke. On each side of the carriage sits a row of workmen, stolid and solemn-looking: some in the cords and battered hat of the bricklayer; a carpenter, perhaps, with his bag of tools; a plumber, like a serpent-charmer, with some yards of piping coiled round his arm; painters, slight and pale, with white "jumpers," or blouses, under their coats. At one station, as we are moving off, a late arrival makes a desperate rush to get in. One at the window, looking out like Sister Ann, is questioned: "Did Bill manage it?" "No, Bill didn't; and dropped his grub underneath the train." Poor Bill! he will chew the cud of bitter regret as he waits for the next train.

A sort of grim appreciation is expressed at this little incident; but for the most part the faces are set and serious. There is little of the salt of youth in these hard-featured men. Some doze off; there is no talk of any kind, but a continuous spitting, for the most part without the excuse of a "quid." At Paddington, daylight is in the ascendant—the lamps are just blots of light, and the newly-polished brasses of the engines, paraded for the early trains, glitter in the morning light. At each station is a crowd of working-men, ready to squeeze into the already well-filled carriages. The young woman with the parcel manages to miss King's Cross, and is carried on to Farringdon, and departs gnashing her teeth. Indeed, it is difficult to see the names of stations through the bodies of half-a-dozen thick-set men standing in the gangway, and nobody takes the trouble to call them out.

And then there is a continual exodus, with the heavy tramp of feet, at each of the City stations, and at Aldgate a general clearance, and a few minutes' delay while a voice afar-off asks, "Ain't you going on to the Tower?" Yes, we are going on to the Tower; and the passage is rather a pleasant one, for underground. There is a smell of cement and fresh-turned soil,

for the line has burrowed beneath the dirt of ancient London, and into the untainted gravel below.

A great opportunity for finds of the archaeological order, one would think, and yet it does not appear that anything very important was found. The remains of Roman London are, it is well known, buried some twelve or thirteen feet below the soil, a fact at first blush rather difficult to account for, till we remember that the digging of cellars and clearing of foundations is quite a modern practice. The old builders never cleared, but only levelled the remains of previously existing structures, and then before dust-holes were periodically cleared and the contents of ash-pits carted away, the debris of a community would accumulate very rapidly. The line strikes across the old City wall, and its foundations gave a tough job to the contractors to clear away, while the City ditch that was filled up as long ago as Charles the First's time contained a considerable assortment of unconsidered trifles, with a few curios among the mass. The presence of a large deposit of horns, several tons of them, creates a certain amount of speculation. One would think that such articles would have always had a certain commercial value, and would not have been shot as rubbish indiscriminately. The cutting, it is said, passes right underneath the mound on Tower Hill where the scaffold was formerly erected, and which has soaked up so much of the blue blood of England. But nothing of the gloom of such memories hangs about the Tower Station. The new station is of pleasant cheerful aspect, with its wooden staircases, leading up to a big gap among tall houses, where a fringe of trees is visible, and blue sky flecked with white clouds.

And in Trinity Square, where we emerge, the air is fresh and pleasant, and below us is the Tower, clearly built rather to command the river than the land, the blue mists of morning hanging still about it, and lingering most of all in the deep dry moat. The Tower, with its Norman pepper-boxes rising over such a medley of buildings, battlements, and towers, with the chimneys of comfortable red-brick dwellings, mediæval loopholes, and modern casements, all mixed up together. Is there in the rest of the world a building—putting aside mere ruins and antiquities—half so interesting as the Tower of London? If the Bastille had been preserved with its terrible memories, we should all make

pilgrimages to see it. But could it vie with our prison fortress, that is still a going concern, with warders and sentinels, and the parade of keys and gates, just as it was in Norman William's day? And one feels that it would be a pity to turn it into a mere museum, although the public should have free access to it at all times, with a service of guides at fixed fees for those who like to employ them.

In front of the postern-gate, a small, dark-coated rifleman is marching up and down—the familiar bearskins being away among the Pyramids—but there are no other marks of life about the fortress, which will presently no doubt awake, with bugle-calls and the rattle of arms as the round of duty begins, that perhaps has never ceased since Norman pennons first crowned the battlements of the keep.

Pleasant enough must have been the houses in Trinity Square with such a scene to look down upon, and the Thames beyond with its crowded shipping, and perhaps on mornings such as these, over the mist of houses, a glimpse of the blue Surrey hills. A square once, no doubt, inhabited by comfortable Trinity brethren, or men snugly connected with the Mint, and the wives and children of such—happy little urchins with such a big plaything always in view from the nursery windows—but they are all gone now, and the houses are shipping-offices for the most part, with strange unfamiliar names where once you might see the brass plates of Brown and Jones. A stray doctor here and there is left, perhaps, and no doubt there is a parsonage somewhere, but all else is business. Here and there groups of men are waiting for warehouses to open, and lower down the hill is a small detachment of spring-carts, whose masters, no doubt, are at this moment buying fish in Billingsgate.

In the river it is dead low-water, and by the stairs two or three boats are lying high and dry on a bed of gravel, and it is here that we may say is the very birth-place of London; the gravelly landing-place, with the defensible hill above, that first tempted some roving tribe to make a settlement by the river. And really, in the quiet of this low tide, the river has a friendly, homely appearance. A boatload of workmen is just being ferried over; and the 'longshore men, who would be about you like so many vampires if you wanted to get on board a ship or catch a steamer, now look upon you with con-

temptuous indifference. And you seem to share the lazy life of the river and the ships, the big steamers lying quietly aground, while the plaintive "Yo heave ho" of the sailors hauling away at a ladder rings pleasantly in the morning air.

But if day has hardly begun on the river, it is fully launched and steaming on at a great rate at Billingsgate. Habitues say with disdain that a Monday's market is only child's play. But it is a very noisy, not to say rude kind of play, while men in white fish-smear'd garments, with boxes on their heads, run amuck through the crowd, that is "yap yap yapping," gathered about some salesman who watches the whole business as if he had nothing to do with it, while an energetic assistant in white overalls does all the work. And then the stairs to the river, where the craft are lying almost jammed together, and mostly aground, and to see the interminable procession of the men in white fishy garments, like the slaves of Aladdin's lamp, with each his tray or fish-box on his head, mounting always in one continued line, with stolid Chinese indifference written on each face! Is there no end to the supply of men in fishy garments?

At last you may, perhaps, make out that there is another set of steps where there is an equally continuous descending stream of these fish-bearers. So that like a stage army the same men may come into review twice over. But the habit of carrying a box of fish upon the head seems to fix a certain expression on the features, and thus the men resemble each other so much that it is impossible to say where the ring begins or ends.

Apart from all this the fish make a fine display; enormous cod that seem capable of swallowing a man whole, and a wonderful variety of fresh-caught fish glowing in all their prismatic colours. And in the street, too, crowded with carts and vans, there is nothing but fish from one end to the other.

Somewhere hereabouts the Monument comes in sight with its gilt top lighted up by the morning sun. And the sudden desire comes to go to the top. For what a sight it must be on such a morning as this to see

Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky.

But no; the Monument is inaccessible till eight o'clock, when the world of London will be shrouded in the smoke of its myriad fires.

And so let us complete the circle for ourselves, stopping in Cannon Street to peer over the wooden hoarding where the navvies are just beginning to work at the tunnelling under the street. And here at the Mansion House we come upon the British workman again with his bundle and his can. But alas! with broad daylight come class distinctions; and an exacting clerk demands of us the full fare home.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER V. A LOVE-SONG.

As a lark at early morning, so sang the child Hilda, sitting at her work in the sunshine.

"Love is not a feeling to pass away
Like the balmy breath of a summer's day;
It is not—it cannot be—laid aside,
It is not a thing to forget or hide.
It clings to the heart—ah! woe is me!
As the ivy clings to the old oak-tree."

A quaint song truly to be sung by a maiden of such tender years, "quite six now," as she was wont to say with a charming air of complacency at being able to lay claim to so much; and who could forbear a smile at the precocious pathos with which the last two lines were given?

The dolorous lay was sung under difficulties too. The dark-blue ribbon which tied back Hilda's sunny hair hardly kept the curling tendrils well in hand, and truants had to be pushed back into an unwilling captivity every five minutes or so. Then, the work upon which the songster was engaged was of such an intricate and responsible character as to require, at critical moments, that rosy lips should be screwed up tight and a bonnie head held well on one side. Hilda's bit of an arm was thrust far into the deepest recesses of a black worsted stocking, and there the wee hand stretched to its utmost to form a frame for that homely kind of needle-work called darning. Under and over—under and over—went the long needle, of which the little woman who guided it in the way it should go looked the least bit in the world frightened, while a beautiful net-work grew.

Not without violet eyes casting wistful looks through the casement whence came streaming in a fountain of golden light;

not without a big sigh now and again heaving the baby-bodica.

"The path of duty is sweet," had been the last copy in her writing-book; and Hilda was in that desirable path at the present time. But for all that she could not help remembering how still and bright would lie the dykes in the sunshine, how charming was the paper-boat she made with her own deft fingers, and proudly floated there the day before.

The bracken was all turning yellow against the rocks. The nuts in the wood were ruddy outside and delicious within. You had but to jump as high as you could, bring your two hands close together, and—why, there you were, you know, and the nuts too!

What was the good of thinking of nutting in the woods, under the leaves that were all red and yellow, when you ought to be giving all your attention to stocking-mending?

An uneasy hitch of the small three-legged stool on which Hilda was perched was the outward and visible demonstration of this penitent reflection.

Hilda had been reared under a system of repression that would have hardened a nature less naturally sweet and tender. As it was, repression had only saddened the violet eyes and given them a dreamy softness, strange and wonderfully winning to see in one so young. It made you feel that the shadow of a womanhood to come was for ever over the child, tempering the ready smile of her sensitive mouth, but not yet having stunted those precious tendrils, the warm and loving sympathies of the child-heart.

Some women are born with a tendency to idolatry. Such idolise, first, a doll, or something that for lack of a better thing represents a doll; then, in time, lover, husband, children follow, each and all filling the place that in the savage heart is occupied by the bit of painted stick he calls his god. The passionate votary is never tired of burning sweetest incense at her shrine; she is willing to spend and be spent, to suffer and keep weary vigil, smiling the while.

Such a nature was folded in that bud, little Hilda's heart. Already an idol was in possession, an idol whose worship was conducted in secret.

But at present Hilda's whole soul is centred on her stocking-mending. The last masterly touches given to a finished work are full of a rapture all their own,

and Hilda's web of lattice-work was close on completion.

"It is not—it cannot be—laid aside,
It is not a thing to forget or hide;
It clings to the heart—ah! woe is me!
As the ivy clings to the old oak-tree."

Again uprose the sound of the pretty love-lorn ditty, but this time the singer held her work out at arm's length and looked at it with her head on one side admiringly as she sang.

"Don't be singing foolish songs when you're at work, Hilda."

The voice came through the half-open door from a room across the white-stoned passage.

"It helps me, mothie, to sing when I'm working."

"That is but a foolish fancy; and the song, where did you learn it?"

"Miss Alicia taught it me, mothie; she said to stop awhile, you know, and sigh—so—"

"She might have taught you something better while she was about it. If I hear of any more such folly, you shan't go to the great house any more this side Christmas."

Hilda shivered, though the sun was shining so merrily through the lattice-panes.

What would the life of anyone be who was forbidden to go to Dale End?

The thought was really too stupendous for the mind to grasp.

No delicate touching of the keys of the old spinet, awaking a certain gracious tinkling sound that seemed delicious to her ears; Miss Alicia standing by, smiling at the player's delight. No half-timid glancing into wonderful tomes, wherein were pictures, fearsome and beautiful, of knights in gay caparison and deadly fight. No stories of the ghost in the blue-chamber; no syllabub in the housekeeper's-room. What would life be, shorn of such delights as these and others akin to them?

"I won't sing any more, mothie," said poor Hilda, "if you don't like me to. All the same, I think it's a be-oootiful song, and I love Miss Alicia for teaching it me."

A pretty mutinous pout steals round the baby-lips that thus utter their small protest; but a sharp slap on the side of the golden-brown head nearly capsizes Hilda from her three-legged throne a moment afterwards, and shows her that there is a price to pay for loyalty to the absent.

"Little wilful!" cries Mrs. Devenant, who has hurried across the house-place thus to administer condign punishment.

Hilda doubtless smarts under the blow, but she does not weep, she does not even complain. She tries to baffle fate by ignoring the knocks it bestows.

"When are you going to learn that it is useless to try and get the better of me, with your wheedling ways?" said Mrs. Devenant, standing beside her small daughter, tall, splendid, implacable.

She was only a farmer's daughter; her brother—honest son of toil—had followed his own plough; had had friendly rivalries with his neighbours as to stacking corn and gathering in crops of mangel-wurzels, and was "respected by all who knew him," as the saying goes. He was so much of a gentleman at heart as never to boast that his sister Hester had "married above her," indeed, in his own mind he thought she had made rather a fool of herself in the matter. He wondered at a man being called by a name that seemed by rights to belong to a higher class of beings; and glancing furtively at Gabriel Devenant's dark deep-set eyes and wild locks, opined within himself that if he claimed kin with an angel at all, it wasn't one of the right sort. Being, however, a man given to mind his land and look upon the proper management of cattle as one of the main ends of existence, the young farmer kept a discreet silence on these delicate points.

Such was Hester Devenant's lineage; and yet she had the mask of a Roman empress, and the dignity of one born to the purple, when she chose to assume it.

Nothing more perfect than the way in which her head was set upon her shoulders could well be imagined; nothing more lovely than the endless coils of dark hair twisted in a rich mass low on her neck—hair that when she sat in a chair and let it fall loose, reached to the ground, and lay there a glorious tangle of curls and ripples.

Strangers looked at Gabriel Devenant's wife, and then said what a beautiful woman she might have been. Only "might have been," for in her face was all womanly gentleness lacking: neither sweetness nor peace had there their dwelling-place. It was the face of a woman at war with all the world, at war with all good impulses, even in her own nature—not unfeeling, but with all good feeling misguided, passionate, aggressive; the eyes dark, defiant—above all, suspicious; the nose chiselled finely, and with those upward curving nostrils that are rare, and rare as beautiful; the mouth cruel, restless, and so marring the perfection of all else. Yet those thin

nervous lips smiled sometimes; chiefly when Gabriel said something which it pleased his wife to hear, or when she stood by Hilda as the child lay sleeping with a flushed cheek resting on a pretty pink palm.

It could not be expected that Mrs. Devenant should be a popular woman. On the contrary, she was a singularly friendless person. Yet she managed to get her own way as much by fear as others did by love. The people about her feared her bitter tongue, and were cautious how they set it wagging; feared her resentment, and were careful not to arouse it. Few cared to try and cross her will; and yet, underlying her life was a tragedy.

She was not what is called young when she married, being five years her husband's senior, and he had then reached his seven-and-twentieth year. She had never had any rustic flirtations. Never had any village lad ventured on the offering of a Sunday posy, or nudged her with an amorous elbow, after the fashion of bumpkin lovers. Tall and stately as one of the pine-trees on her father's farm, she grew to fullest womanhood, gaining not losing comeliness with every passing year.

Then she met Gabriel Devenant, an artist wandering about the grassy lanes and flower-pied fields in search of "bits" of colour.

That time seemed long ago now—that dear dead time; a thing that had been and was not; a dead thing upon whose grave was written no "resurgam."

Hester had loved passionately and madly this slender dark-eyed lover of hers; softened for him as she had softened for none other; became his wife, and then taken the love he bore her into her strong hands, and strangled the life out of it. There it lay, crushed and dead, and out of it grew a terrible thing, holding in itself the very nature of a blight—a thing called toleration.

Hester was jealous of everything her husband loved, of every source of pleasure he found in life that had not its centre in herself. She grew to be the bane and burden of his existence. She was jealous even of his art—in time, jealous of his child. Reproaches and sneers were dished-up to him with every meal—a pungent sauce little to any man's liking. At last he knew himself to have become that most despicable thing—a husband who is pitied for his home-misery, and his submission to a woman's tyranny. He grew reckless. The ambition that had once burnt brightly

in his heart died out and became but ashes. He grew moody, fitful, fond of solitary wanderings. His easel was neglected: he muttered to himself as he sat over the fire, and rarely smiled save when little Hilda crept to his knee and nestled her head lovingly against his breast.

Evil days had come upon the farm that was Hester's maiden home. The old farmer died, and, to the amaze of all, the land was found to be heavily encumbered with debt incurred for a drunken scape-grace son, who had only been seen at uncertain intervals, like a sort of domestic comet of sinister omen, hanging about the place. Then the younger brother—he who had thought Hester a fool for marrying the half-foreign man with the outlandish name—gathered himself and his tools together, shook the dust off his feet, and betook himself to the New World, together with an honest lass, who, setting a field-poppy to blow in his button-hole one ruddy autumn evening, told him she'd "follow him bare-foot round the world," a promise he sealed with a hearty smack of a kiss on lips as red as the poppy itself.

So poverty might have come to Gabriel's quaint little house among the dykes (for though Hester was the thriftiest of women, what's the use of being thrifty if you've nothing to be thrifty on?), but that an aunt of Mr. Devenant's died leaving him a patrimony, small in itself, but enough and more than enough for the requirements of that modest household. People said this stroke of fortune had a bad effect on Gabriel, that where he had once tried to do a little work, now he did none. His hand, though given to shaking sadly, had not lost all its cunning. His eyes, though often strangely filmy and apt to waver as they met yours, could still brighten at the sight of a mellow sunset or the glint of sunshine upon a fruit-laden bough, and his pictures found a ready sale with the dealers.

"He might do something," said Beckington, shaking its many heads, and to this the select circle at the Safe Retreat said: "Ay, ay; so he might," taking the pipes from their lips to let the asseveration have way.

Farmer Dale even saw fit to enter upon the subject anatomically and in detail. "He's got a kind of a paralysation over him, has Maister Dev'nant," said that worthy, hitching his right-hand thumb into the arm-hole of his plush waistcoat, and swelling himself out as one who enters upon

a matter of which he is master ; "a kind of a blight, so to speak, same as Bill Stephens's uncle on the mother's side, him as drags his leg like as if it didn't reetly belong to him, and can't count upon what it 'ull do once it's set a-goin' no more than if it wur a threshing-flail. Well, Maister Dev'nant he's summat i' same way, only he's got it i' his inscide. It's too much thraping from a woman's tongue as is cause on, I reckon ; and then he's half a furriner, which, as I hear, are mostly but a lazy kind o' folk. Still he moight do summat. Bill Stephens's uncle makes shift to rock the craddle for Bill's missus wi' t' leg as he's kep' the whip hand of, that does he. Maister Dev'nant's come o' gentle folk ; one can see that wi' half an eye ; he cannot dig, to beg he is ashamed, as the sayin' goes ; and as to paintin' those bits o' signboards as he used to be so busy about, why his hand shakes too much——"

"That's because he's feert o' his missus," put in Softie, speaking unadvisedly.

"Nay," said the farmer with a fat chuckle ; "if every one of us as had that complaint took to the shivers, there'd be a pretty ditherification among us—we'd be little better than quaking bogs every man and mother's son of us, come Saturday night. And as for you, Softie——"

But Softie had craftily departed, so the meeting returned to the discussion of Gabriel Devenant, and it was unanimously resolved that the man might "do summat."

Apparently Mr. Devenant did not coincide in this resolve. More and more, as time passed on, did he become a mere dreamer, living in a world of fancies, which, to judge by their results, could not have been wholesome mental food.

For all his five years less of life, Gabriel grew to look older, much older, than his handsome wife. Lines deep and haggard marred the somewhat feminine beauty of his features ; grey mingled largely with the lank locks that were thrust behind his ears and then fell loosely on the shabby velvet collar of his coat. His form grew bent, his chest hollow. Wrapped in his favourite outdoor garment, a flowing Spanish cloak, and with hat slouched over his eyes, he was in truth a weird and gloomy figure.

But there was one whose heart so brimmed over with love for this strange, silent, brooding man, that in that precious chalice was no room for fear—and this was Hilda, his "petite reine," his "little

maid," his "fairy," his half-a-dozen other pretty names coined of love.

He would steal up to kiss Hilda good-night, and the two in a wordless ecstasy of tenderness hold each other close, until Hester's clear voice from below came ringingly to know "why he was keeping the child awake at that time of night ?"

Then down dived Hilda under the blankets like a little rabbit into its hole, shaking with happy noiseless laughter, and leaving nothing visible but a tangle of brown curls.

Gabriel had taught the child a few words of the foreign tongue that he loved for his mother's sake—the little black-eyed mother whose quick and graceful gestures when she spoke were among the most vivid of his boyish memories—the little French mother, lost too soon : always pretty, always buoyant, almost young in the memory of her son, though by this time she would have been a grey-haired, withered little old woman, with furrowed brown cheeks and hands like bird's claws, after the manner of her countrywomen in the evening of life.

"C'est donc bien toi, mon camarade !" sounded a sufficiently-quaint and delicious greeting to Gabriel's ears from Hilda's baby-lips, followed, too, as it always was, by the roguish smile of a rosy mouth full of pearls ; but "mother" frowned and chid her husband for teaching the child such "gibberish." So Hilda took to whispering gibberish on the sly, and then straightway laying a tiny finger across her own wilful lips, shaking her snood of curls, and saying "Hush !" the while her pretty eyes brimmed over with mischief.

In all her childish troubles the great and abiding sense of how dearly her father loved her was a source of strength and consolation to Hilda. Doubtless she did not justly estimate her mother's love, since it was so seldom shown, and rather took the guise of a hard yoke than any softer form ; in truth the bane and curse of a misguided love is that it is so seldom looked upon as love at all. Hilda, sleeping, could not see her mother looking down upon her with a rare and tender smile ; she could not tell that the hand, so much oftener felt in correction than caress, had trembled convulsively when once the child's bold and hardy footsteps had led her to wander perilously near a dangerous bit of the deep dyke. The child saw that her father was unhappy in his home ; she could not tell that the wife who wearied

him with sour ways and thwarted him in every little whim and fancy, would, had he lain sick with some deadly disease, have taken her own life in her hand and counted it as nothing of a cost to pay for his. If there are people in the world (as we know there are) made up of such strange contradictions, such extremes of hardness and devotion, of selfishness and self-sacrifice, that they cannot understand themselves, how can it be expected that others should be any better able to solve a problem so intricate?

Hilda, her ears still tingling from the blow that had been the dole accorded to her loyalty to Miss Ashby and the sweet song of true love taught her by that dear lady, looked stolidly out at the apple-tree.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Devenant had taken the work from Hilda's passive hands, and was subjecting it to a critical examination. She would have been glad had it proved to be ill done. That would have seemed to give some justification to her rebuke anent the foolish song.

But the web of worsted tracery was perfect—a marvel, indeed, to have been achieved by such bits of hands.

"This is better than the last," she said, giving the meed of praise grudgingly as her custom was. She ever took a full-flavoured satisfaction in finding fault, the words "well done" always dropping haltingly from a reluctant tongue—than which there is no surer way of sapping the joy out of young lives, and discouraging every effort after good.

Mrs. Devenant wore, hanging by her side, what was called a "handy" in those days, but which now masquerades under the statelier name of "chatelaine." By it hung, suspended to her shapely waist, thimble (in a little cone-shaped case), scissors, knife, and bodkin (in a case like a Liliputian coffin).

Now her hand fell to the level where these treasures hung, and Hilda, gathering up her shoulders to her ears, shivered as if she were making up her mind to have one of those precious pearls, her little even teeth, pulled ruthlessly from its coral bed.

Snip, snap!

The web of carefully made trellis-work is gone, and a gulf yawns in its place.

A cruel way of teaching stocking-mending, but apt to make a clever scholar. As an author, lost in contemplation of the creations of his own brain is often wooed into forgetting that they are not living

creatures, so Hilda, intent upon her mending, had forgotten that the groundwork of her labour was only a "make believe" stocking, which in her parlance meant a stocking fated to be much mended but never worn.

The gaping void which now she stretched upon her finger and thumb, seemed a new-made wound. It looked to her troubled eyes as wide and deep as the deepest dyke in the marshes when the tide was out. The task of bridging it over from side to side with a single thread, drawing it together delicately, and then setting to work on a new patch of warp and woof, seemed the most hopeless of undertakings. She eyed the chasm ruefully, while her mother stood by, reading the lovely mutinous little face only too well, and looking out for some sign of rebellion to be promptly crushed.

Most of us, at one time or other in our lives, have stood shivering on the brink of a gulf that has opened in our pathway, wondering how we are to bridge it over, and then found that fate absolves us from such necessity. It was so with Hilda and her chasm. Just as she had threaded her long-eyed needle, just as she had pulled herself together by a mighty sigh, and was about to attack the enemy, a shadow passed across the casement—passed swiftly and recklessly athwart the sunshine; frightening Hilda into dropping the "make-believe" stocking; making even Mrs. Devenant start; for, having reached the open door of the white-stoned house-place, the shadow stood confessed as Gabriel Devenant, or rather, something that, had time and place served, might have been taken for his wraith, so pallid were the sunken cheeks, so full of dire despair the haggard eyes.

He hardly seemed to see his wife; indeed almost stumbled against her as he crossed the embrasure of the window to Hilda's side.

With a cry the child sprang to his arms, nestling there as he sank upon a wide low settle against the wall, and gathered the little figure to him convulsively.

"My little Hilda, ma reine—ma reine!" he murmured, laying his hand upon her ruffled head, and pressing it against his bosom.

"Qu'as tu, mon père?" she answered, falling into the gibberish he had taught her.

"Qu'as tu—mon camarade?"

"What foolish fancy has possessed you

now, Gabriel?" said his wife, harshly enough, yet not without some furtive signs of trouble either, her strong shapely hand working nervously as it hung by her side. "What are you frightening the child's wits out of her like that for?"

That the child should be thought of before the wife—be this "foolish fancy" what it might—was no new thing to Hester Devenant. She was used to fall into the second place. But, for all that, she stood and watched those two clinging figures with a set, hard face of pain, in which resentment struggled with a rising nameless fear.

The consciousness of being set aside was wont to make her more and more needlessly passionate in her utterances, driving further and further from her the man whom, in her inmost heart, she loved with the same blind passion as when, years ago, she slipped out into the gloaming to meet him in the fields about her father's farm, in that springtide that had been like no other in her life before or since, and yet had grown to such a bitter harvest. Even now, in this hour of his supreme need, if the hand that worked at her side had been laid on her husband's shoulders, if the eyes that met his had been less keen and more tender, who knows what the future might have held for both?

The time came when, in her mad despair, she could have cut off the hand and plucked out the eyes that had been so lacking; but that time was not yet, though its chill shadow was upon her even now.

"Fancy!" cried Gabriel, still holding Hilda close; "foolish fancy! God knows I wish it were but that. It is no fancy. We are ruined, Hester, ruined. The bank has been robbed. Every penny we had in the world is gone. Oh, my little Hilda! my precious one, what will become of you now?"

Still the child, never the wife, not even himself; only Hilda.

"You are mad, raving, possessed by a lying devil!" said Hester, turning from him.

The lips that flouted him trembled. Could a dream, a passing fancy, have so changed him in so short a time?

The blanched and stricken face, whereon stood the beading sweat, wanted but the fixed eye and dropped jaw to look as though the cold hand of Azrael, angel of death, had touched it.

"What can I do? Whither shall I go?" he moaned, rocking himself and the child to and fro. "Look here," he went on, and the agony in his voice forced Hester to turn and face him whether she would or no—"Look here; is this a hand to guide the brush, to work for bread?"

He held up his hand as he spoke—a hand feeble, emaciated, tremulous as that of one palsied.

"It is your own doing," replied the lips that twitched with a growing fear that would not be kept down; "your own doing, Gabriel. If this mad tale you are telling us is true—if Hilda and I are doomed to be homeless and penniless, still—it is your doing."

"Mine?" he gasped; "mine?" while Hilda in terror clung even about his neck. But he unclasped the loving girdle of her arms, and put her from him, staggering to his feet, tearing at the tarnished clasp of his cloak as if its folds stifled him and he would fain be rid of it, pushing the hat from his head, confronting his wife as the criminal confronts his judge, and still gasping out that word of appeal: "Mine—mine?"

"Yes, yours," said Hester pitilessly, roughly shaking herself free of Hilda's clinging hold upon her dress as from something that impeded her utterance; "yours, and yours only! What makes your hand shake like that, Gabriel Devenant? Shall I tell you? Well, it is the dark stuff you take from the little bottle that you keep so secret and think none knows of save yourself—not even your wife. What fills your head with mad fancies, and makes you mutter gibberish in your sleep—what but that devil's drink? If all the banks in all the land were robbed and you with them, you could have kept a roof above our heads by working at your old trade; and now—what have you made of yourself? A helpless fool and nothing else. What have you made of me—and—of Hilda? Paupers, if all you say is true, ay, as much as if you'd been the one to rob what others toiled for. That's what you've made of yourself and of us—and now you must whimper over it like a sick dog."

The time came when she could have torn out the tongue that spoke such words; but the time was not yet, though its chill shadow was upon her even now.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXII. MR. ANDERSON IS ILL.

WHEN they all went down to dinner that day, it became known that Mr. Anderson did not intend to dine with them. "He's got a headache!" said Sir Magnus. "He says he's got a headache. I never knew such a thing in my life before." It was quite clear that Sir Magnus did not think that his lieutenant ought to have such a headache as would prevent his coming to dinner, and that he did not quite believe in the headache. There was a dinner ready, a very good dinner, which it was his business to provide. He always did provide it, and took a great deal of trouble to see that it was good. "There isn't a table so well kept in all Brussels," he used to boast. But when he had done his share, he expected that Anderson and Arbuthnot should do theirs,—especially Anderson. There had been sometimes a few words,—not quite a quarrel but nearly so,—on the subject of dining out. Sir Magnus only dined out with royalty, cabinet ministers, and other diplomats. Even then he rarely got a good dinner,—what he called a good dinner. He often took Anderson with him. He was the doyen among the diplomats in Brussels, and a little indulgence was shown to him. Therefore he thought that Anderson should be as true to him as was he to Anderson. It was not for Anderson's sake, indeed, who felt the bondage to be irksome. And Sir Magnus knew that his subordinate sometimes groaned in spirit. But a good dinner is a good dinner,—especially the best dinner in Brussels, and Sir Magnus felt that something ought to be given in return. He had not that perfect faith in mankind

which is the surest evidence of a simple mind. Ideas crowded upon him. Had Anderson a snug little dinner-party, just two or three friends in his own room? Sir Magnus would not have been very angry. He was rarely very angry. But he should like to show his cleverness by finding it out. Anderson had been quite well when he was out riding, and he did not remember him ever before to have had a headache. "Is he very bad, Arbuthnot?" "I haven't seen him, sir, since he was riding."

"Who has seen him?"

"He was in the garden with me," said Florence boldly.

"I suppose that did not give him a headache."

"Not that I perceived."

"It is very singular that he should have a headache just when dinner is ready," continued Sir Magnus.

"You had better leave the young man alone," said Lady Mountjoy.

Any one who knew the ways of living at the British Embassy would be sure that after this Sir Magnus would not leave the young man alone. His nature was not simple. It seemed to him again that there might be a little dinner-party, and that Lady Mountjoy knew all about it. "Richard," he said to the butler, "go into Mr. Anderson's room and see if he is very bad." Richard came back, and whispered to the great man that Mr. Anderson was not in his room. "This is very remarkable. A bad headache, and not in his room! Where is he? I insist on knowing where Mr. Anderson is."

"You had better leave him alone," said Lady Mountjoy.

"Leave a man alone because he's ill. He might die."

"Shall I go and see?" said Arbuthnot.

"I wish you would, and bring him in here,—if he's well enough to show. I don't approve of a young man going without his dinner. There's nothing so bad."

"He'll be sure to get something, Sir Magnus," said Lady Mountjoy. But Sir Magnus insisted that Mr. Arbuthnot should go and look after his friend.

It was now November, and at eight o'clock was quite dark, but the weather was fine, and something of the mildness of autumn remained. Arbuthnot was not long in discovering that Mr. Anderson was again walking in the garden. He had left Florence there and had gone to the house, but had found himself to be utterly desolate and miserable. She had exacted from him a promise which was not compatible with any kind of happiness to which he could now look forward. In the first place all Brussels knew that he had been in love with Florence Mountjoy. He thought that all Brussels knew it. And they knew that he had been in earnest in this love. He did believe that all Brussels had given him credit for so much. And now they would know that he had suddenly ceased to make love. It might be that this should be attributed to gallantry on his part,—that it should be considered that the lady had been deserted. But he was conscious that he was not so good a hypocrite as not to show that he was broken-hearted. He was quite sure that it would be seen that he had got the worst of it. But when he asked himself questions as to his own condition he told himself that there was suffering in store for him more heavy to bear than these. There could be no ponies, with Florence driving them, and a boy in his own livery behind, seen upon the boulevards. That vision was gone, and for ever. And then came upon him an idea that the absence of the girl from other portions of his life might touch him more nearly. He did feel something like actual love. And the more she had told him of her devotion to Harry Annesley, the more strongly he had felt the value of that devotion. Why should this man have it and not he? He had not been disinherited. He had not been knocked about in a street quarrel. He had not been driven to tell a lie as to his having not seen a man when he had in truth knocked him down. He had quite agreed with Florence that Harry was justified in the lie. But there was nothing in it to make the girl love him the better for it. And then, looking forward, he could perceive the possibility of an event,

which, if it should occur, would cover him with confusion and disgrace. If after all Florence were to take, not Harry Annesley, but somebody else? How foolish, how credulous, how vain would he have been then to have made the promise! Girls did such things every day. He had promised and he thought that he must keep his promise; but she would be bound by no promise! As he thought of it he reflected that he might even yet exact such a promise from her.

But when the dinner-time came he really was sick with love,—or sick with disappointment. He felt that he could not eat his dinner under the battery of the rallery which was always coming from Sir Magnus, and therefore he had told the servants that as the evening progressed he would have something to eat in his own room. And then he went out to wander in the dusk beneath the trees in the garden. Here he was encountered by Mr. Arbuthnot with his dress boots and white cravat. "What the mischief are you doing here, old fellow?"

"I'm not very well. I have an awfully bilious headache."

"Sir Magnus is kicking up a deuce of a row because you're not there."

"Sir Magnus be blowed. How am I to be there if I've got a bilious headache? I'm not dressed. I could not have dressed myself for a five-pound note."

"Couldn't you now? Shall I go back and tell him that? But you must have something to eat. I don't know what's up, but Sir Magnus is in a taking."

"He's always in a taking. I sometimes think he's the biggest fool out."

"And there's the place kept vacant next to Miss Mountjoy. Grascour wanted to sit there, but her ladyship wouldn't let him. And I sat next Miss Abbott because I didn't want to be in your way."

"Tell Grascour to go and sit there,—or you may do so. It's all nothing to me." This he said in the bitterness of his heart, by no means intending to tell his secret, but unable to keep it within his own bosom.

"What's the matter, Anderson?" asked the other piteously.

"I am clean broken-hearted. I don't mind telling you. I know you're a good fellow, and I'll tell you everything. It's all over."

"All over,—with Miss Mountjoy!" Then Anderson began to tell the whole story; but before he had got half through,

or a quarter through, another message came from Sir Magnus. "Sir Magnus is becoming very angry indeed," whispered the butler. "He says that Mr. Arbuthnot is to go back."

"I'd better go or I shall catch it."

"What's up with him, Richard?" asked Anderson.

"Well, if you ask me, Mr. Anderson, I think he's—a suspecting of something."

"What does he suspect?"

"I think he's a thinking that perhaps you are having a jolly time of it." Richard had known his master many years, and could almost read his inmost thoughts. "I don't say as it is so, but that's what I am thinking."

"You tell him I ain't. You tell him I've a bad bilious headache and that the air in the garden does it good. You tell him that I mean to have something to eat upstairs when my head is better,—and do you mind and let me have it, and a bottle of claret."

With this the butler went back, and so did Arbuthnot, after asking one other question. "I'm so sorry it isn't all serene with Miss Mountjoy?"

"It isn't then. Don't mind now, but it isn't serene. Don't say a word about her; but she has done me. I think I shall get leave of absence and go away for two months. You'll have to do all the riding, old fellow. I shall go—— But I don't know where I shall go. You return to them now, and tell them I've such a bilious headache I don't know which way to turn myself."

Arbuthnot went back and found Sir Magnus quarrelling grievously with the butler. "I don't think he's doing anything as he shouldn't," the butler whispered, having seen into his master's mind.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Do let the matter drop," said Lady Mountjoy, who had also seen into her husband's mind and saw moreover that the butler had done so. "A young man's dinner isn't worth all this bother."

"I won't let the matter drop. What does he mean when he says that he isn't doing anything that he shouldn't? I've never said anything about what he was doing."

"He isn't dressed, Sir Magnus. He finds himself a little better now, and means to have something upstairs." Then there came an awful silence, during which the dinner was eaten. Sir Magnus knew nothing of the truth, simply suspecting the

headache to be a myth. Lady Mountjoy, with a woman's quickness, thought that there had been some words between Florence and her late lover, and, as she disliked Florence, was inclined to throw all the blame upon her. A word had been said to Mrs. Mountjoy. "I don't think he'll trouble me any more, mamma,"—which Mrs. Mountjoy did not quite understand, but which she connected with the young man's absence. But Florence understood it all, and liked Mr. Anderson the better. Could it really be that for love of her he would lose his dinner? Could it be that he was so grievously afflicted at the loss of a girl's heart? There he was, walking out in the dark and the cold, half-famished, all because she loved Harry Annesley so well that there could be no chance for him! Girls believe so little in the truth of the love of men that any sign of its reality touches them to the core. Poor Hugh Anderson! A tear came into her eye as she thought that he was wandering there in the dark, and all for the love of her. The rest of the dinner passed away in silence, and Sir Magnus hardly became cordial and communicative with M. Grascour, even under the influence of his wine.

On the next morning just before lunch Florence was waylaid by Mr. Anderson as she was passing along one of the passages in the back part of the house. "Miss Mountjoy," he said, "I want to ask from your great goodness the indulgence of a few words."

"Certainly."

"Could you come into the garden?"

"If you will give me time to go and change my boots and get a shawl. We ladies are not ready to go out always as are you gentlemen."

"Anywhere will do. Come in here," and he led the way into a small parlour which was not often used.

"I was so sorry to hear last night that you were unwell, Mr. Anderson."

"I was not very well certainly after what I had heard before dinner." He did not tell her that he so far recovered as to be able to drink a bottle of claret and to smoke a couple of cigars in his bedroom. "Of course you remember what took place yesterday."

"Remember! oh yes. I shall not readily forget it."

"I made you a promise"

"You did;—very kindly."

"And I mean to keep it."

"I'm sure you do ;—because you're a gentleman."

"I don't think I ought to have made it."

"Oh, Mr. Anderson !"

"I don't think I ought. See what I am giving up."

"Nothing !—except the privilege of troubling me."

"But if it should be something else ? Do not be angry with me,—but, loving you as I do, of course my mind is full of it. I have promised, and must be dumb."

"And I shall be spared great vexation."

"But suppose I were to hear that in six months' time, you had married someone else !"

"Mr. Annealey, you mean. Not in six months."

"Somebody else. Not Mr. Annealey."

"There is nobody else."

"But there might be."

"It is impossible. After all that I told you, do not you understand ?"

"But if there were ?" The poor man as he made the suggestion looked very piteous. "If there were, I think you should promise me I shall be that somebody else. That would be no more than fair."

She paused a moment to think, frowning the while. "Certainly not !"

"Certainly not ?"

"I can make no such promise, nor should you ask it. I am to promise that under certain circumstances I would become your wife, when I know that under no circumstances I would do so."

"Under no circumstances ?"

"Under none ! What would you have me say, Mr. Anderson ? Supposing yourself engaged to marry a girl——"

"I wish I were,—to you."

"To a girl who loved you, and whom you loved."

"There's no doubt about my loving her."

"You can follow my meaning, and I wish that you would do so. What would you think if you were to hear that she had promised to marry someone else in the event of your deserting her ? It is out of the question. I mean to be the wife of Harry Annealey. Say that it is not to be so, and you will simply destroy me. Of one thing I may be sure,—that I will marry him or nobody. You promised me, not because your promise was necessary for that, but to spare me from trouble till that time shall come. And I am grateful,—very

grateful." Then she left him,—suffering from another headache.

"Was there anything said between you and Mr. Anderson yesterday ?" her aunt enquired that afternoon.

"Why do you ask ?"

"Because it is necessary that I should know."

"I do not see the necessity. Mr. Anderson has at any rate your permission to say what he likes to me, but I am not on that account bound to tell you all that he does say. But I will tell you. He has promised to trouble me no further. I told him that I was engaged to Mr. Annealey, and he, like a gentleman, has assured me that he will desist."

"Just because you asked him !"

"Yes, aunt ; just because I asked him."

"He will not be bound by such a promise for a moment. It is a thing not to be heard of. If that kind of thing is to go on, any young lady will be entitled to ask any young gentleman not to say a word of marriage, just at her request."

"Some of the young ladies would not care for that, perhaps."

"Don't be impertinent."

"I should not, for one, aunt ; only that I am already engaged."

"And of course the young ladies would be bound to make such requests,—which would go for nothing at all. I never heard of anything so monstrous. You are not only to have the liberty of refusing, but are to be allowed to bind a gentleman not to ask !"

"He has promised."

"Pshaw ! It means nothing."

"It is between him and me. I asked him because I wished to save myself from being troubled."

"As for that other man, my dear, it is quite out of the question. From all that I hear it is on the cards that he may be arrested and put into prison. I am quite sure that at any rate he deserves it. The letters which Sir Magnus gets about him are fearful. The things that he has done—; well ; penal servitude for life would be the proper punishment. And it will come upon him sooner or later. I never knew a man of that kind escape. And you now to come and tell us that you intend to be his wife !"

"I do," said Florence, bobbing her head.

"And what your uncle says to you has no effect ?"

"Not the least in the world ;—nor what my aunt says. I believe that neither the

one nor the other know what they are talking about. You have been defaming a gentleman of the highest character, a Fellow of a college, a fine-hearted, noble, high-spirited man, simply because,—because,—because——” Then she burst into tears and rushed out of the room; but she did not break down before she had looked at her aunt, and spoken to her aunt with a fierce indignation which had altogether served to silence Lady Mountjoy for the moment.

BOOK COLLECTORS.

At this time, when the sales of the Hamilton, Sunderland and other large libraries are arousing the interest of the outside world, it may be interesting to note some facts connected with purchasers and their purchases. To most people, giving forty pounds, one hundred, or even one thousand pounds for a commonplace-looking book, seems either maniacal folly or wickedness, and as “no one becomes suddenly villainous,” so the book-buyer, beginning cautiously, is gently led on the downward path by the subtle influences which seem to emanate from his treasures, until he flings aside all pretence of economy or utility in making his purchases.

Although many collectors have become historic on account of the number or rarity of their possessions, the type remains the same both in the giants who bid their hundreds, or their less fortunate brethren who are confined to shillings. Both, in many cases, desire a book, not on account of its literary value—which is of little importance in their eyes—but because it is black-letter, or is uncut, has some misprint in it, has a specially broad margin, or is a solitary specimen. Both types, again, too often believe that the last use to which a book can be put is to read it. Nor is the true collector, however wealthy he may be, satisfied with buying largely at auction-rooms or in booksellers’ shops after the orthodox fashion. To him, as to other enthusiasts, the real pleasure lies in the chase. He delights in prowling round all likely or unlikely places, in the hope that amidst the mass of decaying and forgotten lore he may unearth a treasure that will momentarily satisfy him, and that will arouse the envy of his friends and rivals. And formerly, when both booksellers and owners were ignorant of the specialities of different classes of black-letter and other works, such

finds were not infrequent, and the delighted discoverer would retire triumphantly with some rarity which he had acquired for a few pence, and which would, better still, make his friends temporarily melancholy with envy.

Isaac Disraeli classifies collectors as follows: “A bibliognoste is one knowing in title-pages, colophons, and editions, the place and year when printed, the presses whence issued, and all the minutiae of a book. A bibliographe is a describer of books and other literary arrangements. A bibliomane is an indiscriminate accumulator who blunders as fast as he buys, cock-brained and purse-heavy. A bibliophile or lover of books is the only one of the class who reads them for his own pleasure. A bibliotaphe buries them under lock and key and frames them in glass cases.” And to these may be added the “Illustrator,” who destroys multitudes of books to obtain portraits, sketches, or initial letters to insert in any particular volume he may be “illustrating.” Such a work, when completed, may have cost hundreds of pounds in its formation, may have necessitated the mutilation of hundreds of other rare and interesting books, but on the death of its owner will probably be bought for some public library for a few pounds. A kindred barbarian is he who goes about cutting out the title-pages of books, old and new, in order, forsooth, to make a collection of them.

Another collector is he whose love and attention is concentrated on the coat of a book. It is practically immaterial to him whether the contents be a Caxton or modern tract. He lavishes his affection on the morocco or on the tattered shreds of the original covering. Perhaps it is his good fortune to possess a precious relic bound in the carved ivory or jewel-embossed sides in which the noble of old enclosed his treasure, but under any circumstances he fixes his adoration on such bright particular stars as Walther, Payne, Hayday, Hering, Eustace, Vascosan, and many other famous binders. But he also finds his purgatory in the shape of cut-down margins, destroyed autographs, and paper “cleaned” to such an extent that the vitality also has been cleaned out of the sheets, habits which, amongst binders, have now almost attained the dignity of “customs of the trade.”

Another side of the collector’s character must not be ignored, although we may regard his failings leniently. To speak of it charitably, it may be suggested that some

enthusiasts have added to their shelves by less prosaic means than mere purchase. Sir Robert Cotton, the founder of the precious Cottonian collection, held a pardon from James the First for all the State records that he might have embezzled! In another instance a bibliophile was once found hiding his rarest books. Being asked the reason, he replied: "The Bishop of Ely dines with me to-day." The prelate referred to was More, who held this diocese between 1707 and 1714. A French writer states that Pope Innocent the Tenth, when a cardinal, was detected in conveying a tempting volume into his own possession. From accusation and denial, he and the injured owner proceeded to blows, when the missing article dropped from the cardinal's robes.

To notice the formation of public libraries, would carry us beyond the limits of this article, but we may glance at some of the great collectors who have helped to make book-buying fashionable here and in America. In the scarce and heavily written works of Dr. Dibdin are many examples of the ardent connoisseurs of the beginning of this century. Among them perhaps the most famous, both for his generosity, avidity, and industry, was Richard Heber, who possessed the largest private library ever collected—more than one hundred thousand volumes. At his death he held large collections in London, Oxford, Paris, and Brussels, and small rills of five thousand volumes or so in Ghent, Antwerp, and other places. Some of his purchases he had never seen. All came alike to his omnivorous grasp. He was as ready to buy a gathering of ten thousand volumes without seeing them, as to travel hundreds of miles to secure one rare and desirable book. Dr. Dibdin, in *Bibliomania*, lengthily describes him under the name of "Atticus," but does not seem to approve of his accumulation of many copies of the same edition of a work. Heber's reply, when jesting with on this strongly marked form of the collector's rapacity, was, "Why, you see, sir, no man can comfortably do without three copies of a book. One for his show copy, which he will probably keep at his country house; another for his own use; and, unless he is inclined to part with this second or risk the injury of the first, he must needs have a third at the service of his friends." A truly angelic unselfishness which few bibliophiles attain to! There is a fine reference to Heber in the introduction to the sixth canto of *Marmion*.

The library of John, Duke of Roxburghe, sold in 1812, consisted of some thirty thousand volumes. One of these was the famous Valdarfer Decameron, which then fetched two thousand two hundred and sixty pounds, was afterwards sold for eight hundred pounds, and has recently been knocked down for five hundred and eighty-five pounds. The Beckford library at Fonthill was not only famous for its contents, but also for the luxuriousness of its housing. Galleries containing cabinets and book-cases of choice and elaborately carved woods, open-worked ceilings, alabaster and porphyry tables and chimney-pieces, chased panels, portraits, and other articles of historical interest combined to heighten its artistic charm to the reader. The owner, however, had an unenviable reputation for the selfishness and churlishness which caused him to refuse all use of its valuable contents to students, in this way acting in striking contrast to Heber, whose generosity never refused friend or stranger. Beckford bought the library of the historian Gibbon to "have something to read when I pass through Lausanne."

The manuscript portion of the library of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, is now in the British Museum. This consisted of some three hundred and fifty thousand pamphlets, historical, classical, and genealogical. Harley was one of those collectors who combine luxuriance of binding with their fine taste in books. The binding of only a portion of his library is said to have cost him eighteen thousand pounds!

Although somewhat anterior to the period of which we are speaking, we may refer to a most interesting collection and its collector. A good collection of pamphlets has always possessed incalculable value to the student of history and manners. George Thomason, bookseller, of The Rose and Crown, St. Paul's Churchyard, had, in 1641, the happy idea of forming a complete collection of the works then issuing daily from the press, whether for king or parliament. For more than twenty years he gathered them, perseveringly and impartially. He spent thousands of pounds on them—directly and indirectly. He risked fine, confiscation, and imprisonment. He had to send them now into Surrey, now into Essex, as the danger appeared most imminent, but through all his cares and anxieties he never wavered in his purpose. Although an ardent Royalist, he kept the most scurrilous attacks on the king as carefully as those which were

more akin to his political belief, only sometimes writing a word of caustic criticism on the title-pages of the former. In all, he appears to have garnered some thirty-five thousand separate publications, which he bound in two thousand two hundred and twenty volumes.

Thomason died, a disappointed man, in 1666, before which date he had received and refused one offer of four thousand pounds for them, which sum he did not consider sufficient to cover his outlay. Charles the Second directed the royal stationer, Mearne, to buy them from Thomason's heirs, but the king found it difficult to provide money for such a, comparatively, unimportant purpose as the acquisition of these valuable relics. He, therefore, granted the Mearne family permission to re-sell them. This, however, they found it difficult to do, their importance not being recognised, until, in 1762, George the Third purchased them from the then representatives of the Mearne family for three hundred pounds and presented them to the British Museum where they are now known as the "King's Pamphlets." And to one of these pamphlets a curious interest is attached. Charles the First sent to Thomason to borrow it, and, while reading it, happened to let it fall in the mud. He returned it with an apology for his carelessness, and the collector noted the facts on the little book, which still retains memorandum and mud-stain. Other bibliophiles, besides poor Thomason, have earned the gratitude of the nation by, directly or indirectly, bequeathing their treasures to it. Amongst these were Sir Hans Sloane, Sir Joseph Banks, the Rev. Mr. Cracherode, and the Hon. Mr. Grenville, whose gifts amount in all to some ninety thousand volumes which the donors have, at various times, left to the British Museum. Mr. Grenville's library was especially rich in rare and beautifully bound works.

George the Third and George the Fourth were also to some extent collectors, but it may be fairly supposed, from their characters, that their purchases were prompted more by an imaginary sense of duty owed to their position, than by any real desire to form a library. George the Fourth presented the royal collection, of about seventy thousand volumes, to the Museum, in 1823; intending the gift to act as a sop to the people when the perennial question of his debts recurred.

No form of subdivision is minute enough

to classify the collectors correctly. Sometimes they devote themselves to "large paper" copies; others only purchase vellum printed works or manuscripts; the shelves of others are loaded with ponderous folios. Some cultivate one special groove, such as the drama, or reserve their love for volumes revered for—and sometimes only for—their antiquity. Others again seek eagerly after suppressed books or works that have been cancelled on account of some typographical error—errors which are sometimes very humorous in their inappropriateness.

Many efforts have been made to defend the apparent folly of the collector. For the true bibliophile, who loves both to buy and read books, no apology is needed, for many of the purest and wisest intellects that have enlightened this world have felt the desire for the material possession of books and the intellectual acquisition of their contents to be instinctive. Even for the mere bibliomaniac there is something to be said, if only negatively.

If it be necessary for man to be subject to some form of folly, the mania for book-buying is at any rate less harmful than many other grooves into which he, having money and idleness, might fall. Although we have mentioned instances of dishonesty on the part of the collector, still the pursuit is less likely to lead to moral mischief than many others, such as racing, gambling, and drinking, which are almost regarded as comparatively rational and orthodox. And even from a pecuniary point of view he is less likely to waste money than are many others who pride themselves on their superior worldly knowledge. Although a library is rarely sold at a profit, it often brings, if formed with judgment, a large portion of the money expended upon it; and at his death the collector may comfort himself in knowing that the indulgence of the greatest weakness and pleasure of his life has not been bought at the expense of those dear to him and dependent on him.

A few words ought to be said concerning a class who, if not collectors, are often the cause of collectors—second-hand book-sellers.

Many a man, with the instinct lying dormant in him, has gone into a bookseller's shop for some particular work, and, after looking round, has left it with the appetite for acquiring fanned into flame for the remainder of his life. The modern second-hand bookseller is an important factor in the formation of libraries.

Often born and bred among books,

their study his profession, he frequently possesses an amount of knowledge about them which the amateur, with all his spare time, can never rival.

Although most booksellers have some special branch, their knowledge is frequently varied and large, not only in their especial interests—the dates, editions, and values of books—but also in their contents. And most collectors have experienced gratefully the courtesy, patience, and persistence often shown in enquiring for and tracking some scarce and desirable volume, in order to obtain which the bookseller has perhaps to put himself into communication with agencies in both hemispheres.

One difficulty with which the collector eventually meets—the collector of unlimited purse and insatiable maw at least—is that sooner or later he finds himself opposed to a limited number of copies of some scarce book and a relatively unlimited number of competitors for them. Standard works and the less uncommon rarities he may easily obtain. The volumes of his library may be numbered by thousands. Then arrives the time when—appetite growing with food—he is only to be satisfied by possessing solitary survivors whose companions have perished from the effects of fire, neglect, or suppression, or rarities whose fame is world-wide. But on the rare occasions when these come to the hammer he finds himself confronted by other collectors, equally wealthy and determined, and with buyers for the large public libraries of which so many are now being formed here, in America, and in Australia. It is under these conditions that the startling figures are bid that arouse feelings of derision, or even of anger, in people who have no sympathy with the collector's ambition. Space will only permit us to append a very few examples of the striking difference a period little more than a century has made in the prices of specimens of old English Literature. The *Visions and the Creede of Pierce Plowman* (A.D. 1561) was sold in 1756 at the dispersal of the Rawlinson library for three shillings and sixpence. In April, 1882, at the Ouvry sale, it brought ten pounds fifteen shillings. The *Chronycles of Englande* (1483) was sold in 1776 for seven pounds seven shillings. A copy sold recently "wanting some leaves" for fifty-six pounds. Hakluyt's *Voyages* were selling in 1795 for four pounds ten shillings. They are now worth some thirty-two pounds. Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses*, octavo, 1583, sold

in 1791 for one pound fourteen shillings, but recently for eleven pounds. It lately obtained one hundred and fifteen pounds. The collector has also made first editions of modern writers fashionable, with corresponding results on the prices. In the case of Tennyson, the first issues of *Maud*, *Poems*, and *The Lover's Tale*, have produced eight pounds ten shillings, five pounds fifteen shillings, and thirty-three pounds respectively. First editions of Shelley's *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, and *Adonais* have reached twelve pounds fifteen shillings, seven pounds two shillings and sixpence, and forty-three pounds each.

It is the true book lover, of limited means, who suffers by this upheaval of prices. The commercial activity of this century, here and in America, has brought into existence a new and practically uneducated class of men who consider a library to be as essential as a carriage, and the guinea stamp of their claim to "gentility." It is these people who, in their eagerness to find another opportunity for ostentation, have driven the old-fashioned collector out of the field. And they are the modern representatives of the class who collect books for all purposes but those of study. There is undoubtedly a vast and constantly increasing mass of intelligent general readers, but they do not come under consideration here, confining themselves, as they usually do, to standard modern fiction and literature. They, therefore, do not feel the pressure of which we speak, and which only affects the minority who attempt to gratify their hobby in collecting works of a special class. These conditions may be in accordance with the laws of Political Economy; but this is small consolation to a disappointed bibliophile who sees works of the old writers, for whom he has loving appreciation, absorbed into libraries which the owners too often never use.

We cannot do better than conclude with some utterances of Mr. Blades (*Enemies of Books*): "I do not envy any man that absence of sentiment which makes some people careless of the memorials of their ancestors, and whose blood can be warmed up only by talking of horses or the prices of hops. To them solitude means ennui, and anybody's company is preferable to their own. What an immense amount of calm enjoyment and mental renovation do such men miss! . . . To the man of business with a taste for literature, who through the day has struggled in the battle of life with all its irritating rebuffs and anxieties, what a

blessed season of pleasurable repose opens as he enters his sanctum, where every article wafts him a welcome and every book is a personal friend!"

SOME QUAIN'T KENTISH NOOKS.

PROBABLY no shire of England has been more thoroughly laid open to inspection, or is more familiar to tourists and explorers than that which bears for its emblem the white horse of Saxony surmounting the proud motto "Invicta," and yet there are odd out-of-the-way nooks and corners, mostly within easy reach of the railway traveller, which are far less known than they deserve.

The modern rages for bicycling and driving tours has to some extent opened them up, and the new railways in projection will do still more to promote that object; but the modern English traveller too often neglects the attractions which are close at home for those which are only to be seen by hurrying and bustling over long distances abroad, and it is still too true that the object of a very large number of tourists is to cram the greatest amount of work into the smallest possible time, and by so doing entirely to overlook much that is truly amusing, delightful, and instructive.

Most people nowadays have heard more or less about the Dead Cities of the Zuyder Zee, and they are now included in the regular trips arranged by our best known tour-caterers; but how many Londoners know anything of the genuine old dead town of Sandwich, beyond its connection with a recent election petition, and its association with the arrangement of bread and meat which bears its name? And yet there are few places in England which offer greater attractions to the digger and delver in the world of the past than this little high and dry ex-sea-port.

As we approach it—whether from the railway-station or from the Canterbury road—we are struck with its resemblance to well-known pictures of old Dutch towns. There are the broad, green, sheep-dotted meadows, their monotony relieved by an occasional windmill or a shepherd's hut; there are the masts of vessels lying moored in the sluggish Stour, which keeps up enough connection between Sandwich and the sea to warrant the town in still retaining the title of a sea-port. There is the grass-grown rampart still running round the town—once a formidable stone wall, pierced with

loopholes and embrasures, supplied with portcullised gates and draw-bridges, now a pleasant promenade for the inhabitants—and there is the quiet brown-roofed town in the midst, slumbering in the rays of the morning sun the sleep from which it will never be awakened. And upon entering the town the illusion is still kept up, and it is hard to believe that this quiet, listless, odd-angled old place, was as important a port to our ancestors as are Portsmouth and Plymouth to us. Where the sheep now browse and the Sandwich boys play cricket, fleets, considered mighty in those days, rode at anchor in deep water, and upon what was green pasture-land even then, the trireme of the Roman invader kept constant watch under the protection of the great fortress of Rutupia on the cliff-top yonder.

Everything about Sandwich speaks of the old mighty days and of present decay and stagnation. There are streets—streets with quaint names such as Delft Street, Boatluck Street, Knight rider Street, Bowling Street—but there is no movement in them; there are shops, but apparently without customers; there are inns, but seemingly unpatronised save by commercial travellers and bicyclists; there are three grand old churches—of each of which may be said what was written by Longfellow anent the Belfry of Bruges, for the French were terrible neighbours in the old stirring days—churches, any one of which would easily hold the entire modern population of the town; there is a quay, alongside which are moored a few barges and a coasting vessel or two; there is a cattle-market—there is everything, in fact, for the accommodation of life and business, but unfortunately there is no life or business to be accommodated—at least so it appears to the eye of the stranger, although the good Sandwich folk may have a method of their own, unknown to the rest of the world, whereby an immensity of commerce is carried on without the slightest token of its existence.

There never was a more effectual maze built for the bewilderment of strangers than that in which the streets of Sandwich are comprised. The Londoner, familiar with the most intricate ins and outs of the metropolis, becomes as completely adrift in Sandwich as he would be in Pekin. If the original builders of the town may be conceded to have had some sort of a plan in their arrangement, it must have been the complete mystification of everyone but a born inhabitant. for the streets and lanes and

alleys seem all to be jumbled together as if they had been previously shaken together in a huge dice-box and dropped down, as Artemus Ward would have said, "permiskus like." Lanes dart away from the biggest streets with a knowing sort of air and end in no thoroughfares; streets seem to run in circles, or to play hide-and-seek with the houses which jut out just where reason would dictate they ought not to be, steps go up and lead down—nowhere. In short, in very few places is the prominent development of the bump of locality so much a necessity as in Sandwich.

But the explorer is amply repaid for this trifling bother and the frequent dislocation of his equanimity. There are quaintly carved doorways, curious bits of street-corner ornament, genuine old gabled, timbered houses for the artist; there are churches full of fine old wood-work, and fine old tombs of long dead Sandwich worthies; windows of rich glass, and huge Peter's Pence chests, for the ecclesiologist—although of course the hand of the destroyer, that is to say of the restorer, has been hard at work with his inevitable pail of white-wash, and the good old high pews and the fine old grey stone-work in two out of the three churches have disappeared—whilst for the man who seeks contemplative calm there are green churchyards, full of tombs with quaint epitaphs, and surrounded by tumble-down, mullion-windowed, half-monastic, half-domestic looking buildings; or the pleasant quiet walk on the old rampart, with its view over meadows and sand-dunes to the glittering sea on one hand, and the rich hills and woods of Kent on the other.

Old customs still linger in the old town. One church still booms forth the curfew every evening at eight o'clock; another at mid-day sounds what is called the goose-bell, a relic of the old days when the Flemish cloth-workers, driven hither by persecution from their own country, were accustomed to lay down the "goose" at that hour and repair to the church for prayer. On Saint Nicholas Day—the 6th of December—until within the last decade, it was the custom to go through the old form of electing a Boy-Bishop, who held nominal sway over matters ecclesiastical until Innocent's Day, whilst in another part of the town the fishermen marched in procession and held high holiday; and there are inhabitants yet living who have heard their fathers speak of the days when at sunset the town was completely shut

off from the rest of the world by the shutting of the gates and pulling up of the drawbridges—long after gates and drawbridges had ceased to have any actual significance.

Twenty minutes' walking brings us to what is left of a still more completely dead town and sea-port—the remains of the important Roman City of Rutupia, now known as Richborough. The ancient castrum still frowns from the hill-top as it frowned in the days of the Roman invader, but it frowns over a peaceful expanse of green pasture instead of over angry boiling waves. The walls are yet thick and sturdy, and the plan of the old camp is yet distinctly traceable, but of the city which stretched as far inland as the modern road to Canterbury, there is not a stone remaining, except such as have been used in the building of the farm-houses and cottages round about. The ploughman occasionally unearths coins and fragments of tessellated pavement, and the outline of the old amphitheatre is still visible, but of the city which shared with Lympne and Reculver the distinction of being the chief ingress for passengers from the Continent, there is not a sign. One is struck at Richborough with the thoroughness which was as characteristic of old Roman soldier workmen as it was of our middle-age monk architects. Time has not played half the havoc with the walls as has been caused by wanton mischief and the insinuating depredations of the ivy-plant; the secret of Roman mortars still remains undiscovered, although analysts and experts have been unceasing in their attempts to resolve its component parts; and there is little reason to doubt that Richborough will last long after Sandwich has ceased to be.

Just as Ramsgate visitors bother their heads but little about poor old forsaken Sandwich, so the fashionable patrons of Folkestone, Sandgate, and Hythe know next to nothing about the vast expanse of green which lies almost at their doors, and is known as Romney Marsh; and yet Romney Marsh presents distinguishing features of its own almost sufficiently marked to justify the position asserted for it by its inhabitants as being the sixth division of the Weald. As the sea has left Richborough and Sandwich high and dry, so it has deserted the once famous towns of Romney Marsh, in which the same features are reproduced as in Sandwich, but upon a smaller scale. We have already mentioned Sandwich as being a town of perplexity par excellence,

and we may now describe Romney Marsh as being equally a country of perplexity. We are told that there is a path over the marsh, apart from the recently opened railway, and the road which makes a sixteen-mile curve from Hythe to Rye, but it is only known to the shepherds, and the stranger who attempts to find it will probably find himself wandering about utterly lost for hours as did the writer when he confidently attacked it. To the eye the marsh presents but a vast expanse of green, dotted with white sheep, intersected by innumerable water-courses too wide to be jumped and too deep to be forded, and to cross which necessitates a zigzag mode of progression through a series of gates which are so placed at right angles as to render the forward progress of one mile in three-quarters of an hour a very good piece of work indeed. There is a deep, almost oppressive silence over all, a silence broken but by the shrill cries of the peewit and snipe, the bleating of sheep and the tinkle of their bells. The inhabitants of the marsh proper, strange-looking individuals, speak a patois as distinct from the ordinary Kent dialect as is Limousin from Parisian. They live either in their solitary huts, or in clusters of houses generally grouped round a diminutive church, but styled villages, and depend for the necessities of life upon the two towns of New Romney and Lydd. These towns are miniature Sandwiches. Each was famous in old times; each sank and faded as the sea receded; each revived for a while in the days of smuggling and wrecking; each has its fine old church, many sizes too large for the requirements of its community; its quaint bits of domestic architecture; and neither has an atom of life or animation about it except at the period of the Great Romney Sheep Fair. They are interesting simply as fragments of the past existing in the present, but a single day will exhaust them, and we may pass on to other quaint corners without saying any more about them.

Away inland, at the junction of the Maidstone, Ashford, Hawkhurst, and Canterbury roads, lies the little village of Charing. Here, in the very heart of Kent, and for the present far removed from railway influences, one may see the old Kentish life and hear the ring of the true old Kentish dialect to perfection. Until the introduction of railways Charing was a place of no small importance. Even before the advent of stage-coaches it was of some repute as standing on the direct line of the

old Pilgrims' Way, which entered Kent at Tatsfield near Westerham, crossed the Medway at Snodland, ran along the hills past Hollingbourne, Harriestam, and Lenham, and by way of Charing and Chilham passed into Canterbury, which road is still distinctly marked by the double line of sombre yew-trees which fringe it from beginning to end. Moreover at Charing was one of those lordly palaces at which the old archbishops halted on their way to the cathedral city, the others being at Bromley, Otford, and Leeda. But the old palace is in ruins, as completely so as that at Llandaff in Wales to which it bears some resemblance, except such part of it as has been modernised and adapted to farm buildings. But the old landlord of The Swan will tell us that, half a century ago, Charing was a place of constant bustle and animation from its central position as a meeting-place of stage-coaches, and the two inns with their suites of rooms and their extensive ranges of stabling still attest the fact, although, except during the summer months when they are patronised by occasional driving and bicycling parties, they are veritable ghosts of their former selves, and no greater contrast can be imagined than between this Charing amidst the Kentish hills, and its namesake on the banks of the Thames. There are some good specimens of old magpie houses in the village, and the country round is rich in fine old manorial dwellings and pleasant homesteads. If the explorer should approach Charing from the direction of Canterbury, he should by no means omit to pause at the top of the steep hill which leads down to the village and admire the panorama of the Weald of Kent, which is said to be unequalled even in this country of wide-spread and beautiful views.

Most people residing in the south-eastern suburbs of London know Keston as being one of the pleasantest goals for a holiday within easy reach of the metropolis, but it is remarkable how very little is known of the extremely interesting features of the place beyond its natural beauty and its association with the Great Commoner.

Keston has been considered by some antiquaries to be identical with the Noviomagus of the Itinerary of Antoninus, the last of the great stations before London on the Roman Watling Street from Dover; but later researches seem to disprove this, and Dartford or Crayford are regarded as the real Noviomagus. At any rate, Keston was a very important hill station, and the

name is, of course, a corruption of the Latin "castrum."

Keston, much resorted to as it is, may lay fair claim to be considered as one of the quaint nooks of Kent, for although within easy access of London by means of an omnibus meeting the Chatham and Dover trains at Bromley station, and still more so by the new line of railway leaving Elmers End station on the South Eastern system, having its present terminus at Hayes Common, it is as yet as sequestered and out-of-the-way a spot as can be imagined.

The Bromley omnibus stops at the roadside inn known as The Keston Cross, termed in the local colloquial, The Mark, probably from some old Saxon monument which marked the division of the four cross-roads. The road straight ahead leads up to what is called Cæsar's Well, which is the source of the river Ravensbourne, so called, it is said, because when Cæsar's legions were marching along on their way to London, being destitute of water, a huge raven settled down upon the well. The country folk often speak of the well as the old bath, but there is no evidence to point out that the water was ever used for any other than drinking purposes, although it is said to possess certain healing qualities. In an account of Mr. Pitt's residence at Holwood House, published in 1792, the well is described as being planted round with trees, and as having a commodious dressing-place built upon the brink, but this more probably refers to a much larger pond within the park of Holwood immediately below the celebrated oak-tree beneath which, it is said, Pitt and Wilberforce first discussed their project for the suppression of the slave trade.

The old Roman camp covers an area of many acres, and is still tolerably perfect in parts, although thickly overgrown with wood and thicket. It must have been a formidable encampment, for the traces of a triple vallum and ditch are plainly discernible, and that it was a permanent post of observation is plainly attested by the numerous remains of Roman villas, urns, and coins which have been brought to light from time to time. Tradition says that a terrible battle was fought here between the Romans and the Britons; and a mound of earth hard-by Cæsar's Well bears the name of the War Bank to this day. From the old tree known as Wilberforce's Oak, a beautiful view of the Southern Weald is

obtained, with diminutive Keston Church nestling at the foot, and the white road leading to the sequestered villages of Down and Cudham winding away through the pleasant landscape. The park itself, through which a public foot-path runs, is an ideal place for rest and peaceful contemplation; and although Hayes Common, beloved by Bank Holiday tourists and beanfeasters, is hard-by, the rabbits still gambol amidst the knee-deep fern-brake of Holwood, and one is surrounded by so many thoroughly woodland sights and sounds that it is hard to believe that one is so near to vast tracts of suburban villas, and but a mile from the nearest railway-station.

A very quiet nook of Kent is Hever, and to our mind the best way to reach it is from Westerham, now connected by railway with Dunton Green on the South Eastern Line. One may follow this road, or rather this maze of cross-country roads, during a whole summer's morning, and be as completely away from the world of man as in the midst of Dartmoor; and never for one moment need the eye weary of monotony or want of picturesqueness in the surrounding scenery. Hever itself is a fine specimen of the castellated mansions which sprang up all over England during the period immediately preceding the Tudors, when the great baronial castles had been dismantled, and men were beginning to live more at ease and peace, and yet when they had not yet learnt to shake off all ideas of defence in the construction of their mansions. But, attractive as the old house itself is, with its oak-panelled rooms, its galleries, its staircases, its secret passages, and its subterranean dungeons, its chief interest of course lies in its association with the life of the ill-fated Anne Boleyn. Hever folk still maintain that Anne was born here, though Miss Strickland has put it beyond a doubt that her real birth-place was at Blickling in Norfolk. Be that as it may, it is certain that she came to Hever at a very early age, and that the king was wont to come here to woo her from his palaces at Greenwich or Eltham; and three or four hills lying between these places and Hever are still called "King Hal's Hill," from the fact that the messengers used thereon to be stationed to signal his approach to his lady-love at Hever Castle. The stately gardens still remain wherein Anne listened to Henry's tale of love, so do the long gallery, the chamber wherein Anne of Cleves died, and Anne Boleyn's private boudoir; other-

wise the old mansion has been converted into a farm-house.

If our space permitted we would ask the reader to wander away with us into many another pleasant Kentish nook; we would take him with us through the pleasant unknown country which lies between Rye and Tunbridge; we would ask him to accompany us to the mystical Hundred of Hoo, to the picturesque villages which dot the road from Farningham to Otford, even to make a pilgrimage with us along the old yew-shaded Way to Canterbury; but we are warned to stop, and we can only conclude by promising him as much pleasure and amusement and instruction by exploring quaint nooks and corners of Kent as he would find in any other county in England.

IN AN OLD PALACE.

"Yes, darling, I will rest awhile
Upon this ancient window-seat,
This wide, old-fashioned, brown recess,
And watch the pictured loveliness
That decks the chamber round;
Each gay grand lady's courtly smile,
Her full free glance of withery sweet,
And curling tresses all unbound.

"Or I will wander soft and slow,
As suits me best, from room to room,
Again to ponder, as I trace
The features of Loyola's face,
The secret of his power.

Or mark the veiled pathetic woe
In Charles's eyes, that spake of doom
Before the storm began to lower.

"But go thou, sweetest, gaily out,
And sun thyself this sunny day,
Go find again thy favourite nook
Where, babbling like a country brook,
Great Thames goes plashing by;
Or roam the wide old place about
In thine own mood, in thine own way,
And smile beneath the azure sky.

"Go forth and banish from thine eyes,
The haunting shade that vexes me,
Go forth and lose thy childish care
Among sweet things of earth and air,
Blown flower and changing leaf.
Let girlish laughter quench thy sighs,
Let Nature's balsam comfort thee,
Go to, thou dost but play at grief."

We part, she passes from my sight,
Adown the wide, time-trodden stair,
Her foot's faint echo dies away;
Ah me! it seems but yesterday

My little girl was born.
But yesterday, a snowdrop white
She blossomed in the wintry air
Of wedded life, long past its morn.

Of wedded life where love was not,
Or not such love as once I knew!
Poor girl, poor wife! I tried my best
To drive that image from my breast,
And keep me true to thee.

But love had made and marred my lot
Before we met, and one less true
Than thou, had changed the world for me.

And yet, perhaps she did but yield
To father's threat and mother's art:

She might have purposed to be true,
Perhaps—perhaps—I never knew—
Our parting was so swift.

Love one day ours, and all life's field
A-bloom with hope—then forced apart
By wider widths than death's drear drift.

Then I went mad, and mocked at life,
And jeered at all its precious things,
At manhood's faith, and woman's truth,
And spilled the ruddy wine of youth

With wilful, wasteful hand.
I stood with all the world at strife,
Till life was poisoned at its springs,
And clogged with dust, and choked with sand.

But in the end there came to me
An angel in a woman's guise,
She touched my wounds with balm divine,
She poured therein love's oil and wine,
And closed my heart's wide rent.

My love was dead, but I was free,
And could be faithful. Was it wise?
God knows; she said she was content.

And I was faithful, if one call
That faith, which no desires assail;
I could not give her love for love,
But still, I held her far above

Her younger, lovelier peers.
And when, in aftertime, the call
Of death came with an infant's wail,
God knows I made her grave with tears.

But ah, the babe! the little child!
The wailing, wee, unmothered one,
How closely to my heart hath crept
The daughter since the mother slept!

She is my own, my own,
The one clean thing and undefiled,
Life holds for me beneath the sun,
And she is mine—as yet—alone.

I look from out my window-seat,
To see my dainty daughter pass;
Fair as the world's first morning time,
Just rounding to the tender prime
Of girlish blossoming.

A sight that makes my old heart beat;
She stands like Flora on the grass,
By the white statue of the Spring.

And must I lose her? Can I give
My tender maiden from my side?
And to his son—mine ancient foe,
The man who wronged me years ago?

My daughter, it is hard!
How much the heart can bear, and live,
How much forego of hate and pride,
Lest its one darling's life be marred.

Fate wills it so, my little dove,
I will not part thy love from thee;
His noble face is full of truth,
The unspent heritage of youth

Lies yet within his hand.
The father took my early love,
The son will take my child from me,
Nor sire, nor son, could I withstand.

Ah well, he hath his mother's face,
And his dear mother's grave is green,
And since the father, too, lies low,
And since the wrong was long ago,

My heart says, "I forgive."
The lad is worthy of our race,
His heart is brave, his lands are clean.
If love be life, then let them live.

She glides across the oaken floor,
And in the ancient doorway stands:
I look around the pictured wall,
No stately lady of them all

Hath charms so rarely blent.
And one comes with her through the door
With eager eyes and outstretched hands,
Her lover. Child. I am content.

WAITING.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.
CHAPTER I.

"DORA!"

No answer. The lawn was apparently deserted. A round table and a chair were placed in the shade of the low-stretching branches of a huge chestnut-tree. A shawl had been thrown over the back of the chair, and a book and some knitting were on the table; evidently the occupant of the chair had not long deserted her post. A rough skye-terrier, who had been peacefully slumbering in the sunshine, woke up at the sound of his master's voice, stretched himself lazily, and blinked his sleepy eyes.

"Dora, I want you! Come at once," called the master again; "this time it almost amounted to an entreaty. "Dora!"

Even Wasp bestirred himself, and stared hopelessly about the lawn, wagging his sympathetic tail.

Stephen Northlington was a fair, stalwart young Englishman, essentially of the country gentleman type. Handsome, too, and serenely conscious of the fact, he was perhaps inclined to be a little over-particular as to his personal appearance; but this morning, as he strode across the lawn, he was much too preoccupied to give a thought to his dusty boots and gaiters. One glance into the drawing-room showed him that that was deserted as well. He paused for a few seconds on the threshold, and turned again in the direction from which he had come.

As he passed the chestnut-tree for the second time, Wasp gave a quick sharp bark, the branches were pushed aside, and he came upon the object of his search comfortably reclining in a hammock. It would have been hard to find a more desirable resting-place than this of Dora's, under the shade of the great boughs, with the sunlight flickering through the bright green leaves. In one hand she held a large fan, the other she held out towards the new comer.

"Dora!" he said again.

"How cruel of you to wake me, Stephen—you and Wasp between you! I have been reading and doing accounts till my brain whirled, and I had just—Why, what's the matter?"

She had been lying full length in the hammock, idly fanning herself, the very picture of luxurious ease. She was a pale slight girl, and looked hardly more than a child in her white dress and red sash. She

had thrown her hat on the ground, and her dark hair was rough and disordered; her features were regular, the curve of her eyebrows was arched like a bow, and her eyes—grey far-seeing eyes—which had been sparkling with fun a minute ago, flashed and grew into sudden horror as she caught sight of her brother's face.

"Is anything the matter, Stephen?" she asked again, swinging herself out of the hammock and putting her hand on his arm.

"Yes; at least, I want you to prevent Fanny from being frightened. There has been an accident; I don't think it's very serious, but she mustn't be startled. Go up to the house and prepare her mind, like a good child."

"Very well; but can't I help? Who is it that's hurt?"

"Goodness only knows," answered Stephen with the slightest possible trace of vexation in his voice. "An artist or photographer of some kind. He was sketching out in the middle of the road, and never heard the cart coming, and Turner drove clean into him, as far as I can make out. Mrs. Turner's beside herself, but Turner is bringing him round nicely—and, by-the-bye, she wants some brandy and some eau-de-cologne. We shall have Dr. Brown in a few minutes. Fetch it, will you? Oh, and, Dora!"—she was half-way towards the house already—"if Fanny is asleep, don't disturb her, but come down to Turner's at once."

Dora did not wait to ask another question, but disappeared through the doorway. She took a small brandy-flask out of the dining-room sideboard, hastily snatched a smelling-bottle and Fanny's silver vinaigrette off the drawing-room table, and ran back again down the garden-walk in time to catch up her brother. He was holding an animated conversation with a short broad-shouldered man in a wide-awake.

"Your servant, Miss Dora," said he, raising his hat as he caught sight of her anxious face. He had keen bright eyes and a kindly smile. "The poor young fellow down at Turner's has come to himself already. The doctor is with him, and has infinitely relieved Turner's mind by declaring that there is nothing very wrong, only a broken arm and a few bruises."

Dora heaved a sigh of relief.

"I am glad," she said. "I was afraid it was a bad accident."

"Bad enough, to all intents and pur-

poses," put in her brother. "But women always like to make things out worse than they really are. It gives them something to think about, I suppose. Now, I do beg, Dora, that you won't make a long story out of this to terrify Fanny. I dare say, after all, our strolling painter will be off again to-morrow or the next day, and it's to be hoped he has learnt a little wisdom. He won't station himself and his traps in the very middle of the Queen's highway again in a hurry. Well, I must go to the farm. I ought to have been there an hour ago, if it hadn't been for this miserable business. Take the brandy down to the cottage, will you, Dora, there's a good child; it may be wanted. We shall see you, then, at dinner, Wyatt? Oh, Dora, just tell Turner to send up to the house for anything that the doctor may have ordered. I shall be round that way myself presently. Good-bye."

"All right," said Dora; "I'll go at once and say that you are coming."

She turned towards her companion with an amused smile on her lips. He had been standing silent during Stephen's harangue, listening to his multifarious directions.

Being such a very old friend of the family, George Wyatt knew as well as Dora did, that the visit to the farm was but an excuse, a mere pretence not to appear too interested in the welfare of the unlucky stranger, for whose benefit he would willingly have given the best of everything that his house afforded.

"May I come with you to the cottage?"

"Yes, do; and we needn't walk so fast now; it's so hot."

"Let me carry that for you."

Mr. Wyatt put out his hand for the flask.

It was not the least in her way; but she was thoroughly accustomed to be waited on by Mr. Wyatt, and now she handed him the vinaigrette and the silver-headed smelling-bottle, and finally took his arm, to be helped down the hill, and persuaded him into putting up his umbrella to shade her from the sun.

All these little duties and attentions were performed by George Wyatt as a matter of course. Had he not loved and admired little Dora Northlington since she was a tiny school-girl? He had been her brother's friend since his boyhood; had helped him out of innumerable scrapes; had advised him to buy The Chestnuts, the garden-walls of which could be seen from

his own study windows; had introduced him to his wife, the pretty delicate Fanny, who was on no account to be alarmed or disturbed; and, finally, he had acted as best man at the wedding, which had taken place about eight years before the hot summer day on which the idea occurred to "the wandering photographer" that Turner's cottage, with the fir-woods and the hills in the distance, would make an excellent sketch, as seen from the middle of the turnpike-road.

George Wyatt had begun life by reading for the bar, not because he had any particular taste for the study of law, or because he saw his way to making a career, but because his uncle wished it—the uncle who had adopted him and intended to leave him the sole possessor of Trevden Hill, with its comfortable house and old-fashioned garden.

However, before George had arrived at the dignity of a first brief, his uncle died. He then gave up his London chambers, retired into the country, farmed his own land, became a magistrate, and in all things—with the one exception that he brought no wife home to Trevden Hill—proved himself the example of a worthy country squire. He was shy, grave, and silent, not by any means an amusing man, but his tenants respected him, his servants loved him, Stephen Northlington and his wife looked upon his approval as a simple matter of necessity in all matters of importance, and as for Dora, Mr. Wyatt was her right hand and best friend.

After the death of her parents, and before Stephen's marriage and the purchase of The Chestnuts, there had been a gloomy period in little Dora's life. She had been left under the care of a widowed cousin, who had promptly gone abroad for her health, and had sent Dora to a first-rate school, with an arrangement that she should remain there during the holidays whenever it should happen to be convenient. For three long dreary holidays it did happen to be convenient.

Dora still shuddered as she thought of the melancholy days when she was left to amuse herself in the deserted school-room, or taken for a walk up and down a stiff parade, and not allowed to approach the sands and the delicious little waves within thirty yards of her, for fear of spoiling her boots.

Stephen came to see her now and then, and the two together talked of the golden time to come when Dora should be old

enough to keep house for him. On one of these occasions Stephen appeared with a friend.

"This is Mr. Wyatt, Dora," he explained, as Dora looked at the stranger with undisguised annoyance, and gave him an unwilling hand. Had he come to spoil her day, and take Stephen away from her? "This is my great friend, Mr. Wyatt; he is stopping down here, and we are all going to have tea with his cousin. I have asked for you to come out for the whole day."

"Till it is quite dark!" asked Dora, still turning away from her visitor. She had looked at him once; he was ugly, and grave, and very old.

"Yes, till nine o'clock; that was the latest."

"Did Mrs. Fortescue say that I might stay till nine o'clock?" asked Dora, her eyes gleaming with pleasure.

"She did; and who do you think begged for such an extension of leave, because we are going to see an old lady who will take great care of you?"

Once more Dora looked at Mr. Wyatt; he was smiling now, and his face had lost its sadness.

"Don't mystify the child, Steph," he said. "Will you come, Miss Dora, and spend the day with my cousin? We will do our best to amuse you."

"And Stephen?" asked Dora, still hesitating, but drawing a step nearer.

"And Stephen," said Mr. Wyatt; "will you come?"

"Yes, please," was all Dora said. But once outside the door, she put her little hand into George Wyatt's, calmly accepting him as her friend, and as a benefactor of mighty influence, who had known how to break through the iron rules of the establishment, and to keep her out till nine o'clock.

Mr. Wyatt's cousin took a fancy to Dora, and from that eventful day the dreariness of her school-life was much mitigated. She was often invited to stay with her new friend; Mr. Wyatt brought her story-books, and even went the length of hiring a pony, and teaching her to ride. Before long came the news of Stephen's engagement; the invalid relative returned to England, just in time to superintend the ordering of Dora's white muslin and blue ribbons for the wedding, and to administer a few homely truths on the subject of her future behaviour at The Chestnuts, where she was now to take up her abode. After this, a

severe east wind having set in, the invalid returned to her villa at Nice, and Dora was sent into the country to receive her brother and his wife. Sunny days had begun for little Dora; there was no more school, there were no more melancholy walks on an asphalté parade, and she gradually grew from a delicate child into a healthy blooming girl. Years had passed by, and life still flowed on in a smooth unchecked current to the inhabitants of The Chestnuts; two small boys had been added to the family circle, and were the special care of Aunt Dora. Indeed, Fanny—at all times a fragile and constitutionally indolent little woman—had given up the reins of government into the hands of her young sister-in-law, and was only nominally at the head of affairs. It was Dora who managed the household, amused the children, wrote the letters, to a great extent entertained the visitors, and undertook the numerous little duties for which somebody must always be responsible in a country house. And Dora was equal to the emergency. She made no pretensions, but quietly did the work which came to her hand, and lived her life in the peaceful country village, enjoying each pleasure that came in her way to the uttermost. And up to the present time she had wished for no change, and had no thought for the morrow.

"I'm so glad we met you," said Dora, as she and her companion turned into the field at the extreme corner of which the chimneys of Turner's cottage were visible; "poor Stephen seems thoroughly upset, doesn't he? Perhaps there will be something else wanted, or another doctor will have to be fetched; it makes things so much easier to have you here. But, Mr. Wyatt—"

In spite of the old friendship, and though Stephen's boys habitually called him "Uncle George," Dora had no more familiar name for him than this. She stopped short, and looked out into the distant view of fair fields, which had already begun to ripen under the warm June sun; woods that looked blue in the distance; and the silver stream that wound in and out the hay-fields, and, finally, was lost to sight somewhere behind the clipped yew hedges of Trevden gardens.

"Mr. Wyatt, what a terrible thing if this poor man had been killed! Do you really think he is out of danger?"

"I assure you the doctor said so, though we have every reason to be thankful that

the accident was no worse. Don't distress yourself about it, my child."

Dora's eyes were shining with excitement.

"I was only thinking," she said, "how dreadful it would have been for his mother and sister."

"But, you know, we are not certain that he has got a mother and sister," observed George Wyatt, who wished to make things look as favourable as possible, and fell back upon this truism as a means of restoring Dora to herself.

"That would be worse than ever. You know it would."

"Well, really, Dora, supposing that the poor fellow had been killed—and I don't see why we should look upon the affair from such a melancholy point of view—I think it would be just as well if he had no near relations. It would be such a terrible shock to them, as you said yourself just now."

"Yes," said Dora, pulling to pieces the daisies that she had worn in her dress; "only I did not put it into such grand words. But at the same time it would be much worse, because he would have been so lonely, and there can't be anything so bad in the world as to be quite alone, and have no one to care for you."

"Perhaps he has got some friends, missy?"

"That's not quite the same thing," said Dora somewhat incoherently; "friends wouldn't care much. I would rather be run over and hurt, horribly hurt, if there was somebody alive to be sorry, than left all alone to know that there would be no one to mind whatever happened."

"That is not likely ever to be your case, Dora," said George Wyatt, looking kindly on her flushed face; "why do you make yourself miserable about what is impossible?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. You never liked me to romance, did you? I will try and be sensible, and, Mr. Wyatt——"

"Yes?"

"I won't make any more unpleasant speeches about friends; they are very nice people to have about one, after all."

"Especially when they presume upon their position, and lecture one a little now and then."

"All for one's own good, of course," put in Dora saucily; "but I was going to say, especially if they hold up umbrellas and carry flasks on a broiling morning. Now I can see Mrs. Turner at the window; she

looks very pale, poor thing. I'll just go in and speak to her. Will you please stop here till I come back?"

"Certainly I will. Let me know if there is anything more to be fetched. I can send a telegram, or ride into town myself, if Stephen is too busy."

Dora accepted the proposal with a smile and a nod, and disappeared in the Turners' doorway.

George waited as he had promised, walking up and down the sandy piece of road just outside the garden, walking with as light a tread as was possible in order not to disturb the sick man. He had begun to contemplate the desirability of smoking a quiet pipe, and had lighted a fusee, when he heard voices, and turning round beheld Dora shaking hands with Mrs. Turner, who had got an apron to her eyes.

"My brother will be glad to hear such a good report," Dora was saying; "don't fret, Mrs. Turner, you have behaved beautifully. Now I must go, or Mr. Wyatt will go without me. Good-bye."

Mrs. Turner stood at her cottage door, watching the pair as they leisurely turned towards the stile that led to the hay-field. She had been a servant in the family before Mr. Northlington had bought The Chestnuts, and consequently took a deep interest in the welfare of each individual member. At the present moment she was much agitated (having, in fact, been turned out of the sick-room by the doctor, as worse than useless), but her agitation did not prevent her from speaking her mind to the sympathising neighbours, who had come to glean the latest report of the catastrophe.

"Well, 'tis true. Mr. Stephen, he will come and bustle about, and talk to you by the hour together, and Mrs. Stephen, she looks what she is, a kind handsome lady in poor health; but in time of trouble give me Miss Dora, though she does look so young and helpless, bless her!"

In the meantime, Dora, with no thought in her mind of acting the part of ministering angel—having, indeed, had some difficulty in concealing her amusement at poor Mrs. Turner's account of the accident—was chatting eagerly to her companion as they sauntered home through the fields. That was what generally happened when the oddly-assorted pair were together, this pretty light-hearted girl and the grave man. Dora talked and George Wyatt listened. He was not a great talker, but an excellent

listener, which is a somewhat rarer characteristic. Dora was accustomed to his matter-of-fact short observations, and was in no way perturbed by his silence this morning. Her thoughts ran principally on the subject of the invalid, as was natural, but as they came to the garden-gate a new idea struck her.

"I must go in and tell Fanny. I hope she won't have been made nervous by the servants. It is so unfortunate that we have got a dinner-party to-night. If Fanny gets a headache she won't come down, and Stephen doesn't like that. She was ill the last time that people dined with us."

Mr. Wyatt knew too well what Mrs. Stephen's nervous attacks were, to under-rate Dora's apprehensions.

"Is it too late to put the party off?" he suggested.

"Quite impossible," answered Dora, shaking her head.

"Then you must go and talk to Fanny; if she hears of the accident from you, she will not mind so much."

"Very well," said Dora, putting out her hand; then with a sigh: "It does seem awkward that we should all be so put out by an utter stranger, and he'll go away in a day or two, and we shall never any of us see him again. I'm inclined to agree with Stephen, he might just as well have chosen some other place to be run over in than our village. Please come early to-night, and be very useful, cover the pauses in the conversation, and make things go."

"I'll do my best," said George Wyatt.

If, like the princess in a fairy story, she had asked him to accomplish some unheard-of feat, to storm a castle single-handed or slay a dragon, he would probably have made the same answer.

"I'll do my best for you, Dora."

It might be that a day would come when Dora would realise the depth and truth of George's friendship, and know how excellent a thing the "best" of a good man is!

then another coming up from the town, told eagerly (and not without a certain pleasure in having such marvellous news to tell) of the wonderful events that were convulsing Becklington to its centre.

Mrs. Devenant was a woman who had no "gossips"—no favourite scandal-mongers who, gathered in a magic fireside circle, bespattered this or that one's character to the merry clink of tea-cup and saucer. She had always held aloof from even her nearest neighbours, and some of these, smarting under this reserve, were nothing loth now to carry ill news to which she could not well turn a deaf ear, since its personal interest for herself was so extreme.

They came and they went; they babbled and disputed; one telling this version, one another. All dilating profusely upon Gabriel Devenant's seizure in the market-place, sparing the wretched listener no single detail of how he "rolled his eyes and foamed at the mouth," the while Hester fought proudly for calmness and fortitude, chiding Hilda at every turn as an outlet to the growing trouble in her own breast.

For let who might come and go, there was one who had gone and came not again—Gabriel Devenant.

What had he said in answer to those bitter words hurled at his head like so many stones flung from a sling?

With eyes dark, cloudy, full of desperate pain, such as may be seen in those of the dumb beast she had likened him to, he had started to his feet, striving for breath and speech.

At last the words came:

"I am all you say, and more; I have been weak and wicked, but it was your temper—your jealous ways—your mocking tongue drove me to it."

Then dazed and full of a nameless fear, Hester leant against the casement, holding back the lattice with her hand, to watch the flitting figure pass away under the ruddy apple-boughs.

Not unpursued though.

For a little maid with brown locks flying out behind her ran on nimble feet, and caught him by the fluttering ends of his cloak, caught and held, and kissed the hand that would have put her aside (lips being out of reach); and Hester saw him stoop, lift the little one in his arms, let her curl about his neck, let her nestle her head upon his shoulder as he murmured softly: "Ma petite reine! ma petite reine!"

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER VI. HER WEARY QUEST.

AN hour later on that ill-fated day and Hester Devenant knew that no mad fancy had filled her husband's brain, but a stern and cruel truth. First one and

All her life long Hilda will hear the echo of those words when she thinks of a love that seemed to pass out of her life with the utterance of them.

Mother and child took their noontide meal together, while at the round white wooden table under the house-room window a third chair stood empty.

When tea-time came it was empty still, and Hester's face was pale, with a deep line showing between her beautiful brows, and now and again a convulsive twitch stirring her mouth.

No fresh news came from the town, for the excellent reason that there was none to come, since everything was in abeyance, waiting the advent of that terrible arm of the law, the Bow Street runner. Apparently the townsfolk found a sad consolation in staring at the closed bank, and Jake spent a spasmodic afternoon in constantly pursuing Abel Dibbs across the market-place, catching him by the lobe of the ear, and dragging him ignominiously away from the pleasures of a stony contemplation of the one central object of interest.

That night the sun went down clad in royal robes of crimson and gold—beautiful diaphanous robes whose skirts trailed across the blue dome of his kingly domain in glorious amplitude. Then in his wake came the quiet moon, climbing a stairway of fleecy cloud to peep at little Hilda, fast asleep with a tear on her eyelash and now and again a sob heaving her gentle bosom.

The little soul had fallen asleep, after long wakefulness, wondering, wondering, wondering what had become of "mon camarade;" and the glistening tear and those piteous sobs were the aftermath of that troublous time of thought and longing.

Ere long a tall figure, hooded and cloaked, the hood shrouding a pale eager face, bent over the sleeping child a moment, laid the bedclothes more easily, put back the out-flung hands into warmth and shelter, and then went softly away.

Hester and pride had held fierce and bitter conflict, and the woman had gained the day. To seek what she had herself driven forth, even in seeming to unsay what she had said, was a bitter humiliation to Gabriel Devenant's hard and haughty wife. And yet—go she must!

The long lonely hours of the night, hours of uncertainty, of wild surmise, of solitary self-communing, faced her like a black wall ready to fall upon and crush

her. Step aside she must to escape that threatening horror.

This was not the first time by many a one that Gabriel had gone forth from his home a fugitive from a hail of words, a sufferer under the cruel thong of a woman's tongue; but never before had he had the same look upon his face—not only the look of a tortured animal, but of a hunted creature brought to bay and ready to do some desperate thing in a despairing self-defence—never once in all the weary years of terrible dispeace and jangling discord, until now!

It was late, very late for a woman to be out alone in that lonely place, when Mrs. Devenant closed the door of the house and stood a moment—not knowing whether to turn this way or that.

The half-hour past eleven chimed from the church tower as she hesitated. This way or that? Downwards, towards the town, where a few glimmering lights told of life and stir? Or upwards, towards where the dark pines grew thick, making the air fragrant with their fallen spears and cones; where the pollards kept watch beside the dyke, and the water-rat rustled among the sedges and broke the stillness with the splash of his dark sleek body in the stream? The tide was rising, filling the dykes with a swift rush. Hester heard the water sobbing as it rose. It had an eerie sound coming from under the bank of flags and ferns. The pollards shivered in a new-born breeze that came up from the sea. A curlew, startled from its roost, fluttered low upon the ground, crying, as it flew, a weird and plaintive cry like the cry of a broken heart.

She gathered her cloak about her, and set off towards the town. For awhile the road ran alongside a branch of the many-mouthed river, then branched off, passing through goodly fields and under spreading beech and linden trees. It was more of a lane than a road, and more rutty than the farmers quite approved of; not so straight, either, as it might have been by a good deal, so that Hester, going downhill, heard someone singing coming up hill whom yet she could not see.

No tender nightingale wooing the night with softest melody, but rather some burly bull of Bashan striving to be tuneful; someone, too, who had got hold of the day topsy-turvy, inverting the order of Nature, for though the moonlight slept upon the meadows and scattered jewels on the

ripples of the river, he sang the song of morning, lustily, and as if he meant it :

"Let all my converse be sincere,
My conscience as the noonday clear ;
Think how all-seeing God, thy ways,
And all thy secret thought surveys."

Farmer Dale—for the singer was none other—was still at the job of trying to bear his burden of sorrow like a man. He was bringing his sturdy yeoman's mind to settle upon any possible lights that might be discernible in what looked like a prospect bleak and dark indeed. He had many blessings to be thankful for: first and foremost, an excellent, thrifty, cheery-minded wife.

"A man as has that blessin' i' his life conna be a poor man, so to say, no matter how the wind blows," thought Farmer Dale, jogging along at a steady pace. "She'll make no mighty bodderment over the thing, won't Nancy. 'It's a bad job, Tom,' she'll say, 'and we mun just mak' best on't,' that's what she'll say. But there's yon lad o' mine, as I'd thought to give such schooling to as should mak' a gentleman on him, and now, weel, weel, he'll have to bide whoam and moind t' farm, and that's all about it."

Somehow the outcome of this train of thought on the farmer's part was the singing of that untimely and inappropriate morning hymn. The fact is, it was borne in upon his honest soul that someone bore a heavier burden than loss or sorrow that night; that a load of black guilt was pressing on some human creature; that it was better to have a sorrowful heart than a seared conscience.

"Wake and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels—"

Eh day! Mistress Davenant, does you be yo'!"

The excess of his musical zeal carried him on so that he chanted the sentence almost as if it were a part of the hymn.

The farmer stood still, and Hester stood still.

"Have you chanced to see my husband?" she said, twisting her hands one in the other as she spoke, trying to strangle the rebellious pride within her.

The farmer, glancing keenly and furtively at the troubled face, clipt round by the plaited hood, took off his low-crowned beaver, the better to scratch his head.

There was what he called in his own mind a "daft-like" look about Hester that he didn't fancy; he doubted if the man

who had robbed the bank—be he who he might—could look worse.

That is what he thought; what he said was this:

"Aye, I seen him, por' chap, down by the market-place; he seems troubled i' his moind like, mistress, but that's what a many of us are this day, and he must howd up—he must howd up like t' rest on us."

"Did you speak to him?" she said, looking as if she were deaf to all else save the one fact that her husband had been seen."

"Noa, he giv' us t' alip, did Maister Devenant; he flitted by us, so to say, slape as a bat on t' wing."

"Which way did he take?" said Hester, twisting her hands more and more. Her pride was rolling in the dust, yet rearing its bruised head like some living thing.

"I conna reetly say," said the farmer; "he flitted, yo' see, mistress."

"Yes, but which way did he flit?" said Hester with some impatience.

"He flitted out o' soight; he seemed like as if he were sore troubled in t' yed. There's a many i' Becklington same as him this night, Mistress Devenant, but happen their yeds is stronger than hisen and can stand more wi'out brastin'."

Hester, still pressing her hands the one in the other, made some assenting motion of the lips, while her eyes, gazing wistfully around, seemed to say:

"Whither shall I turn my steps to seek my lost one?"

Farmer Dale let no look of hers escape him; he saw that things were going badly with her, and his honest kindly heart yearned to help her.

"See, missis," he said, coming a step nearer to her side; "happen it 'ud be well if yo'd let me go along with you after Maister Devenant? It's a lonesome time for a woman to be out; and as to my old woman, why it's this way twixt her and me, if so be as I should chance to be out of reason late, she'd know there'd be good cause. I've stayed a bit over time at The Safe Retreat to-night, there bein' so much to talk over and digest, as you may say, but, bless you, what does that matter? Nance knows I'm always safe to cross t' plank as lies over t' brook at bottom of our garden wi'out a stumble. Good fellowship I'm for; drunkenness I'm agen; and that there plank I calls a test. 'Build a proper bridge, Tom,' says Nance to me (she's a proud kind o' wench is Nance, and

one as likes to shine afore her neighbours); 'No,' says I to her, 'I wo'ant; that there plank's a test,' says I; 'if I comes home as a sober man should, I can cross it; if I'm the worse for drink, in I go, and out I get a mask o' duckweed; let t' plank bide."

All this sounded somewhat irrelevant on the part of the speaker, but it was not meant so. It was said partly to gain time (in the hope that Gabriel Devenant might suddenly "flit" into sight, and bring his wife's quest thus happily to an end), partly as an outlet or overflow for the growing uneasiness in his own bosom, and a consequent reluctance to lose sight of the troubled yet defiant woman.

It may be questioned whether Hester even heard the story of the plank that was the nightly test of the farmer's sobriety. Yet she felt a warm sense of comfort in the sound of his hearty voice, and of help in his hearty sympathy. The weakest part of her even longed to accept his offer of companionship. But the pride within her shrank from the thought of any third person witnessing her meeting with the man from whom she had parted in bitterness and anger.

"It is very good of you to offer to go with me, farmer," she said, gazing not at him, but into the world of flickering shadows about them, as though she longed to be gone, "but I had rather go alone. Good-night to you." Then she added with a faint smile that lighted up her face into wonderful beauty for the moment: "Don't think that my own trouble makes me forget yours."

Another moment and she was out of sight, so quickly did her eager feet bear her onward, while the farmer was left alone under the stars, with the night wind sighing through the pines.

"I'm blest!" he thought to himself, smiting his thigh in wonderment, "but that's a rum 'un, that is! Such a scholar, too, as I hear. Why, my lady herself don't speak prettier; and eyes like gimlets for going through a chap; a tongue, too, as I hear, like a whip o' sma' cords. She's a fine woman, and no mistake, is Mistress Devenant; but there's blessin's as cuts both ways, I reckon."

Here a vision of Nancy's apple-face and cheery smile came up before the eyes of his mind, and he felt that his own lot had fallen into him in pleasant places. But, keeping his homeward way, he went thoughtfully. He sang the morning hymn no more. A

dead march—had he known one—would have better suited his frame of mind.

Mistress Devenant might have a bitter tongue and a hard look, but for all that she carried that night a terrible load of fear and sorrow in her breast, or he—Farmer Dale—was "a Dutchman."

Lacking the phlegm of that stolid nation, he was conscious of a great pity for the woman who—at once sad and defiant of her own trouble—had just set out upon a weary quest.

Truly, she deserved such dole of compassion as she made her lonely way towards the lights of the town that lay gathered in a group in the hollow near the sea.

For with every step the fears that had borne her company all through the day grew and multiplied, one giving birth to another—the offspring darker than the parent.

Mingling with these came phantoms of the past—sad-eyed ghosts of things that had been, and were not, nor ever should arise to new sweet life again. How was it that the words of Hilda's foolish song—the song that had been rudely chidden as a fault—came to Hester's remembrance now?

It is not—it cannot be—laid aside;
It is not a thing to forget or hide.

What cannot be laid aside—what cannot be hidden, pile what you may of stifling coldness or cruel estrangement upon its reproachful face? The love of a wife for the man who has been the lover of her youth. You may trample it, but it will not die; you may outrage it, but it will not fly; and in the hour of sorrow and suffering it starts into new life, new strength, new passion.

It clings to the heart—ah! woe is me!
As the ivy clings to the old oak-tree.

In vain did that hydra-headed monster, Hester's pride, try to tear it and cast it from her; it would not be put forth. It kept her eerie company, dimming her unaccustomed eyes with tears, so that the lights of the town grew blurred to her sight; she sobbed as she walked. A torrent of irresistible tenderness towards the man she had driven forth with jeers and taunts flooded her soul. If she could only find him—only find him! How all the old happy days came back to her! The days when she first met him, when he seemed to her better than the best—goodlier than the goodliest. Their first chance meeting when she came upon him at his easel in a leafy dell, stealing the leaf shadows from the grass to set them, soft

and wavering, on his canvas. The gentle words he spoke, seeing her; his timid request that she would stand a moment, her coal-scuttle bonnet hanging on her arm, the olive-green of her simple cloak and gown harmonising well (so he said) with the lighter greens about her; the bunch of ox-eyed daisies and pimpernel at her breast lighting up the whole.

And she had lingered there to do his will, holding her head proudly the while, too, as a sort of compromise with dignity; she had stood there feeling the light of his eyes upon her as the flowers feel the sunshine—feeling that he was drinking in each special beauty as she had been dowered with—possessions never so highly valued before, but now precious exceedingly.

For love came to Hester Deacon at a bound, not in dainty lingering steps, later in life than to most women, and therefore more infinitely sweet: for is not the late prune oftentimes the ripest?

How sweet it was, as the early summer days passed on, and meetings grew from one to many, making each day bright with points of light as though it were a night and set with stars, to note how Gabriel Devenant's wonder grew at all the things the farmer's daughter knew; at the books she had read, at her gentle speech, free from the rough Lancashire dialect; at the stately grace of every movement; at the glory of the massive coils of burnished hair which formed a queenly crown about her head!

And then—just when hay-carrying was over, and all the lanes were sweet, and every low-bending branch was fringed with hay brushed from passing carts high-piled—the evening when first he told his love in words; when first his lips touched hers, and she shivered beneath the solemn ecstasy of the first thrill of passion that her life had ever known. She had been a proud and lonely woman, this farmer's daughter, who was so much above her surroundings; who, longing for knowledge, had stretched forth her hand to gather it; living from day to day in company with her own thoughts and seeming to need no other; even then, more feared than loved; aggressive in her demands of submission from her own family, wedded to her own will, imperious, jealous of slight, less happy than many a less gifted woman.

But when Love came, his magic touch changed everything, teaching Hester a

strange new gentleness, filling all her life with fragrance, as the scent of the hay perfumed all the world in those fair days of summer's first and sweetest harvest.

Why did these memories of a far-off time lift their dead faces from the shroud of years, pleading so piteously for remembrance and recognition—to-night?

The very wind that came up from the sea, buffeting the gently-stirring pines, seemed laden with the perfume of the new-mown hay; the ripple of the river she was nearing seemed to sing the song of the merry hay-makers—the song she and Gabriel had stood to hearken to in the gloaming?

No, no; the words of their song did not run like that—

It is not—it cannot be—laid aside;
It is not a thing to forget or hide.

Who sang that dreary coronach?

Hilda, sitting in the sunshine, with the flickering shadows from the apple-boughs outside touching her pretty locks, and the black worsted stocking stretched upon her hand.

Forget! Who can do that if the old delver Thought takes to turning up bones and relics, and all such charnel-house properties?

Hide! What is the good of hiding things that come creeping out of their niches, and peer into your face, whether you will or no, whispering:

"Do you not know me? I am the love you tried to kill, the tenderness you tried to trample under foot. Look at me! Am I not wan and wasted? Let me stay. Do not drive me from you; do not let me think that I am quite forgotten."

Thus did Hester, haunted, fearsome, full of a growing dread, betake herself upon her weary quest.

No human being save herself seemed astir. Once a startled rabbit darted across her path with ears uplifted and white tail aglint.

Once, twice, thrice, a bat circled about her head, and, recalling an old north-country superstition, she shuddered, drawing her cloak closer and walking more hurriedly.

Three times the bat flies;
And someone lies
Dead ere dawn
Of tomorrow's morn.

A crazy rhyme of Hilda's, learnt from some foolish country wench or ignorant bumpkin.

Her own head cannot be much to boast

of to-night, since love-songs and meaningless rhymes jostle one another therein, and phantoms, wraiths, and sentimental memories run riot among the rest.

This last rhyme is tenacious too. It sets itself to the sound of her own footsteps like words to music :

Someone lies
Dead ere dawn
Of morrow's morn.

She has reached the fork where two roads meet. The lights of the town gleam nearer now—at least, such of them as are not put out because of the lateness of the hour.

Hester stands a moment, glancing carelessly—so unlikely is her quarry to be found lurking that way—up the road that leads past the White House, and on towards York city.

Stay! what is that shadow flitting along the rutts that show pale in the moonlight?

It is the shadow of the head and shoulders of a man.

The shoulders are cloaked; the head carries a low-crowned broad-brimmed hat; the rest of the figure is hidden by the shade under the lea of the hedgerow.

Another moment and this shadow of a man is chased by the shadow of a woman.

Hester is on her husband's track.

Her step is light, her limbs are lithe and active.

She gains upon him, is so near him that she can hear him muttering to himself, see him gesticulating—words and gestures meaning Heaven alone knows what!

She can almost touch him now; his shadow almost mingles with hers. She is ready to stretch forth her hand, when lo! nothing but the bare roadway lies before her.

Was it but a phantom that had lured her on, the creature of her own dazed brain?

Had not her eyes been gazing upon the past as upon a fair country seen across a wild waste of barren desert? Was the figure, half in shadow, half in light, but part of that strange mirage of the mind?

Nay, for she had heard Gabriel's foot-fall, heard his muttered words: it was no impalpable wraith she had chased, but a living, breathing man.

She stands a moment bewildered under the gently stirring shadows of the branches overhead, and looks eagerly round. There is no fell mystery in Gabriel's disappearance

after all. He has but slipped through the half-open iron gateway of the White House. Jeremy Bindwhistle having been upset in his mind, partly by the strange events at the bank, partly by Mrs. Prettyman's "snappin' of him up so mighty sharp," partly by the "imperence" of the stable-boy, had been lax in the fulfilment of his duties, and has sought a hasty asylum in the bosom of his family, there to open out his grievances, instead of going his nightly rounds to see that all was as it should be, the gate among the rest.

Hence Gabriel had made his way in without sound of hinge, or click of latch, and, the gateway lying in deep shadow, by reason of the trees that stood thick on either hand, had seemed to be suddenly blotted out from the face of Nature.

Hester follows—not far, though. She creeps among Jeremy's posies, and watches.

Like some bird of ill-omen fluttering round a doomed house, Gabriel swiftly, and with cat-like stealth, makes for a window whence shines a ruddy cheerful light. The window is curtained, but just as Gabriel reaches it the curtain is hastily drawn aside. Gabriel starts back, and with a strange gesture, as of malediction, is lost among the trees by the gate just as the casement is violently opened and set back in its stanchion. Midnight strikes from the old church tower as Hester stands bewildered, up to her knees in a tangle of flowers. Was it fancy, or had she heard a low shuddering cry from within the room whence came the ruddy glow of light?

She had no time now to give to that mental patchwork we all devote ourselves to after any time of intense suffering and excitement. She had no time to put this and that together, to search for motives, to unearth the why and the wherefore of things strange and unwonted.

That was to come after.

She only felt; she did not think. Her mind was set to one resolve, as the needle to the pole. She must overtake Gabriel and lead him home. If she could only find him, she would reproach him no more. A sudden chance of earning a little money had come in her way. She would grasp the chance with both hands. She would work for her husband and for Hilda. She would keep the bread in their mouths, the roof over their heads. She would be glad to do it. Maybe Gabriel would give her that little dark-blue bottle with the glass stopper, and she would cast it into the deepest of the dykes: the shining

bubbles would come up from the bottom, laughing on the surface at the prey far down in the black ooze and mud. Then things would grow brighter. Who knows but that a faint—very faint—reflection of the days she has been looking back upon across the dreary desert of the years that lie between then and now may come about? Hester does not know it, but she is sobbing as she walks, she goes heavily and stumbling, mutters that the ground is rough, whereas it is the hot tears that rise and blind her. Awhile she lingers, waiting, listening, peering among the slender pine-boles for what she cannot see. Then she comes to a resolve. She will go home, just on the chance that Gabriel may have gone there too. Hilda is the magnet that she thinks may draw him thither. He has not kissed the child good-night. He will remember his "little queen." He must be very tired by this time; very weary of wandering; faint, too, for want of food. Yes, she will cross by the narrow pathway through the pine-wood, pass through the dykes, and so reach home again.

It is an eerie place that pine-wood after midnight: endless serried ranks of tall slim boles on either hand; stirring branches overhead that sigh as they sway.

There, it is passed—she is out in the open once more, and draws a long breath of relief.

It is pleasant to be within sight of home again; pleasant to fancy Gabriel may be there before her.

The tide has been rising—is rising still with quick, irresistible rush. The long water-grass bends to the current; the forgot-me-nots are getting their blue eyes wet.

The pollards by the deepest dyke of all, keep their endless vigil like sentries ever alert.

Is that the cry of some night-bird swooping upon roosting prey; or is it a banshee keening forth a warning of sorrow to come?

It is no bird of night—no evil-boding banshee. That cry comes from the ashen lips of a woman who kneels by the swirling dyke, gazing with starting eyes into its black depths.

The hood has fallen from her head—she presses back the hair from her brow

with both hands—her eyes grow to the quivering surface of the water. She crushes all the mellow fern-fronds and golden king-cups that fringe the dyke as she crouches close, close to the treacherous bank.

Is that the gleam of a water-lily kissed by the moonlight, that white shimmer in the dark stream? Or is it a dead white face rising slowly from oozy depths to meet that other bending over it? Slowly—slowly it rises through the veil of the water that parts to let it pass.

And Hester—watching so intently that her heart scarce beats, her breast scarce stirs—waits till the drops fall, shining like jewels, from staring glassy eyes, from livid lips, from long dishevelled locks; then, swaying slowly down to meet it, she catches the floating horror in her arms, and drags it from the current that would have sucked it down again had it got the chance.

Tearing the forget-me-nots from their bed, rending and breaking the sedges and king-cups, she dragged up her burden on to the grass.

She had sought Gabriel long. Now she had found him.

She tore open the breast of his shirt, and thrust in her hand to feel if the heart she had broken still beat.

No faintest movement could she feel. She huddled the cold clammy hands into her own bosom, as though warmth could be wooed back to them.

As she drew him further on to the mossy ground—further away from that terrible yawning grave full of bubbling water, his head fell back in the awful helplessness of death, a fearsome sight, with staring sightless eyes and dropped jaw. Hester knew no fear. She slipped her arm about the neck, pillowing the head upon her breast, rocking herself and it to and fro, moaning as unconsciously as she had sobbed a while ago.

She was alone with her dead. The chill shadow that had been about her path all day now wrapped her round.

And through her dazed brain there ran once more the foolish, crazy rhyme:

Some one lies
Dead ere dawn
Of morrow's morn.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXIII. MR. BARRY.

"GOOD-BYE, sir. You ought not to be angry with me. I am sure it will be better for us both to remain as we are." This was said by Miss Dorothy Grey, as a gentleman departed from her and made his way out of the front door at the Fulham Manor House. Miss Grey had received an offer of marriage, and had declined it. The offer had been made by a worthy man, he being no other than her father's partner, Mr. Barry.

It may be remembered that, on discussing the affairs of the firm with her father, Dolly Grey had been accustomed to call this partner "the Devil." It was not that she had thought this partner to be specially devilish; nor was he so. It had ever been Miss Grey's object to have the affairs of the firm managed with an integrity which among lawyers might be called Quixotic. Her father she had dubbed "Reason," and herself "Conscience;" but in calling Mr. Barry "the Devil" she had not intended to signify any defalcation from honesty more than ordinary in lawyers' offices. She did, in fact, like Mr. Barry. He would occasionally come out and dine with her father. He was courteous and respectful, and performed his duties with diligence. He spent nobody's money but his own, and not all of that; nor did he look upon the world as a place to which men were sent that they might play. He was nearly forty years old, was clean, a little bald, and healthy in all his ways. There was nothing of a devil about him,—except that his conscience was not peculiarly attentive to abstract honesty and abstract virtue. There must, according to him, be always a little

"give and take" in the world; but in the pursuit of his profession he gave a great deal more than he took. He thought himself to be an honest practitioner, and yet in all domestic professional conferences with her father Mr. Barry had always been Miss Grey's "Devil."

The possibility of such a request, as had been now made, had been already discussed between Dolly and her father. Dolly had said that the idea was absurd. Mr. Grey had not seen the absurdity. There had been nothing more common, he had said, than that a young partner should marry an old partner's daughter. "It's not put into the partnership deed?" Dolly had rejoined. But Dolly had never believed that the time would come. Now it had come.

Mr. Barry had as yet possessed no more than a fourth of the business. He had come in without any capital, and had been contented with a fourth. He now suggested to Dolly that on their marriage the business should be equally divided. And he had named the house in which they would live. There was a pleasant genteel residence on the other side of the water,—at Putney. Miss Grey had suggested that the business might be divided in a manner that would be less burdensome to Mr. Barry. As for the house,—she could not leave her father. Upon the whole she had thought that it would be better for both of them that they should remain as they were. By that Miss Grey had not intended to signify that Mr. Barry was to remain single, but that he would have to do so in reference to Miss Grey.

When he was gone Dolly Grey spent the remainder of the afternoon in contemplating what would have been her condition had she agreed to join her lot to that of Mr. Barry, and she came to the conclusion that it would have been simply

unendurable. There was nothing of romance in her nature; but as she looked at matrimony with all its blisses,—and Mr. Barry among them,—she told herself that death would be preferable. “I know myself,” she said. “I should come to hate him with a miserable hatred. And then I should hate myself for having done him so great an evil.” And as she continued thinking, she assured herself that there was but one man with whom she could live, and that that was her father. And then other questions presented themselves to her; which were not so easily answered. What would become of her when he should go? He was now sixty-six, and she was only thirty-two. He was healthy for his age, but would complain of his work. She knew that he must in course of nature go much the first. Ten years he might live, while she might probably be called upon to endure for thirty more. “I shall have to do it all alone,” she said; “all alone;—without a companion, without one soul to whom I can open my own. But if I were to marry Mr. Barry,” she continued, “I should at once be encumbered with a soul to whom I could not open my own. I suppose I shall be enabled to live through it as do others.” Then she began to prepare for her father’s coming. As long as he did remain with her she would make the most of him.

“Papa,” she said as she took him by the hand as he entered the house, and led him into the dining-room. “Who do you think has been here?”

“Mr. Barry.”

“Then he has told you?”

“Not a word;—not even that he was coming. But I saw him as he left the chambers, and he had on a bright hat and a new coat.”

“And he thought that those could move me.”

“I have not known that he has wanted to move you. You asked me to guess, and I have guessed right, it seems.”

“Yes; you have guessed right.”

“And why did he come?”

“Only to ask me to be his wife,”

“And what did you say to him, Dolly?”

“What did I say to the Devil?” She still held him by the hand, and now she laughed lightly as she looked into his face. “Cannot you guess what I said to him?”

“I am sorry for it;—that’s all.”

“Sorry for it? Oh, papa, do not say that you are sorry. Do you want to lose me?”

“I do not want to think that for my

own selfish purposes I have retained you. So he has asked you?”

“Yes; he has asked me.”

“And you have answered him positively?”

“Most positively.”

“And for my sake?”

“No, papa; I have not said that. I was joking when I asked whether you wished to lose me. Of course you do not want to lose me.” Then she wound her arm round him, and put up her face to be kissed. “But now come and dress yourself, as you call it. The dinner is late. We will talk about it again after dinner.”

But immediately after dinner the conversation went away to Mr. Scarborough and the Scarborough matters. “I am to see Augustus, and he is to tell me something about Mountjoy and his affairs. They say that Mountjoy is now in Paris. The money can be given to them now, if he will consent and will sign the deed releasing the property. But the men have not all as yet agreed to accept the simple sums which they advanced. That fellow Hart stands out and says that he would sooner lose it all.”

“Then he will lose it all,” said Dolly.

“But the squire will consent to pay nothing unless they all agree. Augustus is talking about his excessive generosity.”

“It is generous on his part,” said Dolly.

“He sees his own advantage, though I cannot quite understand where. He tells Tyrwhit that as there is so great an increase to the property he is willing for the sake of the good name of the family, to pay all that has been in truth advanced; but he is most anxious to do it now, while his father is alive. I think he fears that there will be law-suits, and that they may succeed. I doubt whether he thanks his father.”

“But why should his father lie for his sake since they are on such bad terms?”

“Because his father was on worse terms with Mountjoy when he told the lie. That is what I think Augustus thinks. But his father told no lie at that time; and cannot now go back to falsehood. My belief is that if he were confident that such is the fact he would not surrender a shilling to pay these men their moneys. He may stop a law-suit,—which is like enough, though they could only lose it. And if Mountjoy should turn out to be the heir,—which is impossible,—he will be able to turn round and say that by his efforts he had saved so much of the property.”

"My head becomes so bewildered," said Dolly, "that I can hardly understand it yet."

"I think I understand it; but I can only guess at his mind. But he has got Tyrrwhit to accept forty thousand pounds, which is the sum he in truth advanced. The stake is too great for the man to lose it without ruin. He can get it back now, and save himself. But Hart is the more determined blackguard. He, with two others, has a claim for thirty-five thousand pounds, for which he has given but ten thousand pounds in hard cash, and he thinks that he may get some profit out of Tyrrwhit's money, and holds out."

"For how much?"

"For the entire debt, he tells me; but I know that he is trying to deal with Tyrrwhit. Tyrrwhit would pay him five thousand, I think, so as to secure the immediate payment of his own money. Then there are a host of others who are contented to take what they have advanced, but not contented if Hart is to have more. There are other men in the background who advanced the money. All the rascaldom of London is let loose upon me. But Hart is the one man who holds his head the highest."

"But if they will accept no terms they will get nothing," said Dolly. "If once they attempt to go to law all will be lost."

"There are wheels within wheels. When the old man dies Mountjoy himself will probably put in a claim to the entire estate, and will get some lawyer to take up the case for him."

"You would not?"

"Certainly not,—because I know that Augustus is the eldest legitimate son. As far as I can make it out Augustus is at present allowing Mountjoy the money on which he lives. His father does not. But the old man must know that Augustus does, though he pretends to be ignorant."

"But why is Hart to get money out of Tyrrwhit?"

"To secure the payment of the remainder. Mr. Tyrrwhit would be very glad to get his forty thousand pounds back;—would pay five thousand pounds to get the forty back. But nothing will be paid unless they all agree to join in freeing the property. Therefore Hart, who is the sharpest rascal of the lot, stands out for some share of his contemplated plunder."

"And you must be joined in such an arrangement?"

"Not at all. I cannot help surmising

what is to be done. In dealing with the funds of the property I go to the men, and say to them so much, and so much, and so much you have actually lost. Agree among yourselves to accept that, and it shall be paid to you. That is honest?"

"I do not know."

"But I do. Every shilling that the son of my client has had from them my client is ready to pay. There is some hitch among them, and I make my surmises. But I have no dealings with them. It is for them to come to me now." Dolly only shook her head. "You cannot touch pitch and not be defiled." That was what Dolly said, but she said it to herself. And then she went on and declared to herself still further that Mr. Barry was pitch. She knew that Mr. Barry had seen Hart, and had seen Tyrrwhit, and had been bargaining with them. She excused her father because he was her father; but according to her thinking there should have been no dealings with such men as these, except at the end of a pair of tongs.

"And now, Dolly," said her father after a long pause, "tell me about Mr. Barry."

"There is nothing more to be told."

"Not of what you said to him, but of the reasons which have made you so determined. Would it not be better for you to be married?"

"If I could choose my husband."

"Whom would you choose?"

"You."

"That is nonsense. I am your father."

"You know what I mean. There is no one else among my circle of acquaintances with whom I should care to live. There is no one else with whom I should care to do more than die. When I look at it all round it seems to be absolutely impossible. That I should on a sudden entertain habits of the closest intimacy with such a one as Mr. Barry! What should I say to him when he went forth in the morning? How should I welcome him when he came back at night? What would be our breakfast, and what would be our dinner? Think what are yours and mine;—all the little solicitudes; all the free abuse; all the certainty of an affection which has grown through so many years; all the absolute assurance on the part of each that the one does really know the inner soul of the other."

"It would come."

"With Mr. Barry? That is your idea of my soul with which you have been in communion for so many years! In the

first place you think that I am a person likely to be able to transfer myself suddenly to the first man that comes my way?"

"Gradually you might do so,—at any rate so as to make life possible. You will be all alone. Think what it will be to have to live all alone."

"I have thought. I do know that it would be well that you should be able to take me with you."

"But I cannot."

"No. There is the hardship. You must leave me, and I must be alone. That is what we have to expect. But for your sake, and for mine, we may be left while we can be left. What would you be without me? Think of that."

"I should bear it."

"You couldn't. You'd break your heart and die. And if you can imagine my living there and pouring out Mr. Barry's tea for him, you must imagine also what I should have to say to myself about you. 'He will die, of course. But then he has come to that sort of age, at which it doesn't much signify.' Then I should go on with Mr. Barry's tea. He'd come to kiss me when he went away, and I—should plunge a knife into him."

"Dolly!"

"Or into myself, which would be more likely. Fancy that man calling me Dolly." Then she got up and stood behind his chair and put her arm round his neck. "Would you like to kiss him? Or any man, for the matter of that? There is no one else to whom my fancy strays, but I think that I should murder them all,—or commit suicide. In the first place I should want my husband to be a gentleman. There are not a great many gentlemen about."

"You are fastidious."

"Come now. Be honest; is our Mr. Barry a gentleman?" Then there was a pause, during which she waited for a reply. "I will have an answer. I have a right to demand an answer to that question, since you have proposed the man to me as a husband."

"Nay, I have not proposed him."

"You have expressed a regret that I have not accepted him. Is he a gentleman?"

"Well;—yes; I think he is."

"Mind; we are sworn and you are bound to speak the truth. What right has he to be a gentleman? Who was his father and who was his mother? Of what kind were his nursery belongings? He has become an attorney, and so have you. But has there been any one to whisper to him among his

teachings that in that profession, as in all others, there should be a sense of high honour to guide him? He must not cheat, or do anything to cause him to be struck off the rolls; but is it not with him what his client wants and not what honour demands? And in the daily intercourse of life would he satisfy what you call my fastidiousness?"

"Nothing on earth will ever do that."

"You do. I agree with you that nothing else on earth ever will. The man who might, won't come. Not that I can imagine such a man, because I know that I am spoiled. Of course there are gentlemen, though not a great many. But he mustn't be ugly and he mustn't be good-looking. He mustn't seem to be old, and certainly he mustn't seem to be young. I should not like a man to wear old clothes, but he mustn't wear new. He must be well read, but never show it. He must work hard, but he must come home to dinner at the proper time." Here she laughed, and gently shook her head. "He must never talk about his business at night. Though dear, dear, darling old father, he shall do that if he will talk like you. And then, which is the hardest thing of all, I must have known him intimately for at any rate ten years. As for Mr. Barry, I never should know him intimately, though I were married to him for ten years."

"And it has all been my doing?"

"Just so. You have made the bed and you must lie on it. It hasn't been a bad bed."

"Not for me! Heaven knows it has not been bad for me."

"Nor for me as things go;—only that there will come an arousing before we shall be ready to get up together. Your time will probably be the first. I can better afford to lose you than you to lose me."

"God send that it shall be so."

"It is nature," she said. "It is to be expected, and will on that account be the less grievous because it has been expected. I shall have to devote myself to those Carroll children. I sometimes think that the work of the world should not be made pleasant to us. What profit will it be to me to have done my duty by you? I think there will be some profit if I am good to my cousins."

"At any rate, you won't have Mr. Barry!" said the father.

"Not if I know it," said the daughter; "and you, I think, are a wicked old man to suggest it." Then she bade him good-

night and went to bed, for they had been talking now till near twelve.

But Mr. Barry, when he had gone home, told himself that he had progressed in his love-suit quite as far as he had expected on the first opportunity. He went over the bridge and looked at the genteel house, and resolved as to certain little changes which should be made. Thus one room should look here, and the nursery should look there. The walk to the railway would only take five minutes, and there would be five minutes again from the Temple Station in London. He thought it would do very well for domestic felicity. And as for a fortune, half of the business would not be bad. And then the whole business would follow, and he in his turn would be enabled to let some young fellow in who should do the greater part of the work and take the smaller part of the pay, —as had been the case with himself.

But it had not occurred to him that the young lady had meant what she said when she refused him. It was the ordinary way with young ladies. Of course he had expected no enthusiasm of love; nor had he wanted it. He would wait for three weeks and then he would go to Fulham again.

"TO NEXT-OF-KIN."

AN advertisement appeared not long ago in the agony column of The Daily Paper. "Next-of-Kin.—Two millions of unclaimed property. Firkin, Brewer, Scott, Smith, and Robertson, advertised or otherwise enquired for. Apply confidentially to Mosby and Co., Rufus Street, W.C." Now, my name being Firkin, the sight of this advertisement gave me a certain thrill of pleasurable interest. And it somehow seemed to fit in with sundry day dreams, in which the possibilities of the fuller and freer life to which wealth might furnish the passport had often presented themselves. On the shady side of thirty, with a wife and a fine lot of youngsters, it was hardly likely that I should achieve any great fortune in my own line—at least I had not begun the process. But the chance, however remote, of some wonderful inheritance unexpectedly falling in, was sufficient for the imagination to work upon; and there was just enough obscurity in the annals of the Firkin family, to furnish a vague possibility of such an event.

We are from Normandy, it is said, we

Firkins, and were originally "de Fescamp," and being Protestants, had emigrated to England at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. That the family had once been rich and well-endowed was a tradition unsupported by any positive proof. But in my childhood I remember an old maiden aunt who told stories to that effect, and who would throw out hints that what had been lost might one day be found again. Of course this was all nonsense and illusion. But still such illusions afford more real pleasure than the contemplation of the hard and uncomfortable facts of existence, just as a bubble in its opalescent radiance delights the eye that is indifferent to the bar of best yellow in its native state. Anyhow you may see how the little seed, in the way of an advertisement in The Daily Paper, fell upon ground that was somewhat prepared for its reception. There could be no harm, surely, in calling upon Mosby and Co., and enquiring as to the possible Firkin who might find something to his advantage.

I was a little ashamed of my credulity as I mounted the narrow and decidedly dirty stairs that led to the offices of Mosby and Co., on an upper floor. And yet the modesty of their surroundings was, after all, reassuring. No portion of the unclaimed two millions could have stuck to their fingers. And, indeed, on seeing the person who answered to the name of Mosby, I was convinced that I had to do with an enthusiast rather than an impostor. The man was deep in the ramifications of some pedigree; his hair was uncombed; the room reeked of tobacco; and he hardly noticed my entrance in his absorption.

"Ah!" cried Mosby, when I had succeeded in attracting his attention to my card. "Another Firkin—eh! Let me see. A Firkin of Staffordshire married a Gold of Northampton, and had issue; perhaps you claim through him?" "But what was there to claim?" I ventured to enquire. "My dear sir," replied Mosby, "I can't tell you. You've been advertised for, that's all I know. And you all seem to be crowding in, so I should fancy it was a big thing. Well, hand in your name, and your father's, and grandfather's, and we'll make preliminary search; fee a guinea."

The mention of the fee had a wonderfully sobering influence on my imagination. I am extremely speculative in ideas, but when it comes to hard cash, the original cautious and sceptical Adam comes to the

front. I was quite ready to pay the man in his own coin, to promise him the most liberal percentage on any property I might acquire by his instrumentality. But our genealogist shook his head sadly over the notion. He must have solid ground to go upon. Still he felt that he might touch bottom at half the fee originally named. Upon that I replied that I would consult my friends, and Mosby, who seemed well-acquainted with this formula, dived once more into his pedigree as if he felt that I was not worth further attention.

But on my way out I met upon the stairs a man whose face I recalled as familiar. Yes, he was a neighbour, living in our street, a tailor by trade; a very respectable man, I believe, who occupied the basement of Number Sixty-eight—my number being Eighty-six, you will observe—a tailor who carried on his trade down below, while he lets out the rooms above to lodgers. I see him as I pass in the morning busy with his shears, or perhaps wielding his goose in the process of ironing out seams—his bald head a shining point of light in the shaded interior. His wife, a good deal younger than he, is often at work at the sewing-machine; and there is a little girl who makes herself useful, perhaps in the process called basting. But they had not been at work on this particular morning, I remember. My friend was standing at the window, eagerly perusing a copy of *The Daily Paper*, and the last page of it, too—the agony page, while his wife looked over his shoulder with eager interest, and the little girl watched them open-mouthed. Was it possible that he, too, was interested in the two millions?

Hitherto I had said nothing to my wife about Mosby and Co.'s advertisement, or about my visit to their offices. In the first place I rather dreaded being laughed at; or, if she did not laugh at me, she would be too dreadfully in earnest, and be continually worrying me to take all kind of impracticable steps in the matter. But if ever I plan a little scheme of concealment, it is sure to break down, and the present occasion was no exception. For, coming home one day, I found my wife in full blaze of excitement over a letter which had just arrived, and which, being marked "Immediate," she had opened. As my narrative hinges a good deal on this letter I had better give an exact copy, thus:

"Rufus Street, W.C., 3rd April, 1882.

"RE FIRKIN.

"DEAR SIR,—In accordance with your instructions we have made search and taken extracts from advertisement relating to above, and herewith hand same to you.—Truly yours,

"MOSBY and Co.

"To MR. FIRKIN, 68, Malbrook Street, W."

"(ENCLOSURE).—FIRKIN, NEXT-OF-KIN.

"To the next-of-kin, and all persons having any claim on the estate of Martha Firkin, late of Three hundred and Sixty-five, Belvedere Road, Lambeth, in the County of Surrey, who died at St. Thomas's Hospital. . . . Apply . . ."

"Now, what does it all mean?" asked Amy, her eyes sparkling with pleasurable excitement. "Had you given instructions? Is this a surprise you intended for me? Have we come into a fortune or something?"

At first sight of the letter I came to the conclusion that Mosby and Co. had taken upon themselves to make the search alluded to without further instructions from me, speculating only on the probability of getting their fee in the end. And I had explained all this to Amy when I suddenly caught sight of the address upon the letter—Number Sixty-eight—and recalled at the same moment the face I had seen on the stairs. The letter was not for me; the tailor of a few doors higher up must be the genuine Firkin for whom the letter was intended. He had rushed in and paid the fee of which I had been chary, and here was I complacently possessing myself of the information for which he had paid.

"But the man is not a Firkin," cried my wife disdainfully. "His name is Martin. Didn't I send a coat of yours to him the other day? But I believe," added Amy, a thunder-cloud in her eye, "that he must have found some of your letters in the coat-pocket—you are always so careless about papers—and that he means to personate you, and get possession of our property." And with that she marched off, the letter in her hand, to confront the tailor and demand an explanation.

Presently she returned, but in a less emphatic mood. The letter really belonged to our neighbour. There was no doubt about it at all. Mrs. Martin, the tailor's wife, had claimed it at once and identified it as coming from "the office"—the next-of-kin office—and about some property they expected to come in for; and as for

the name being Firkin—well, that was her maiden name, and the people at the office had made a mistake.

Now, in all this my wife quite saw the finger of Providence. The tailor's wife might be a distant connection, but the Martha Firkin whose heirs were wanted clearly belonged to us. The very eccentricity of dying in a hospital when there was money to leave behind—money enough to set lawyers and others at work to find owners for it—yes, there was something characteristic of a Firkin in all this. And then the christian-name—just the Puritanical kind of name a Firkin would be sure to have! Amy declared that she could picture the old woman in every detail, with a pinched austere face, her Bible in one hand and her bank-book in the other—not a nice person to know, but a charming one to be next-of-kin to.

Altogether, my wife infected me with a little of her enthusiasm. At all events, it would be well to get to the bottom of the matter; but then, if any expense had to be incurred, it was only fair that the Firkin family in general should take their share in it. But the Firkin family did not respond at all warmly. It was admitted that there might possibly be something in the matter worth looking into. Somebody vaguely recalled a possible Aunt Martha of a former generation; but beyond reminiscences and anecdotes bearing out the notion of the Firkin family being extremely eccentric, nothing came of it. Certainly nothing in the way of providing funds for the enquiry.

Meantime it was maddening to see the triumphant glances of the tailor every time we passed his window. He had a way of rolling his eyes round, as he looked up, that suggested his metaphorically swallowing us up. And his affairs were evidently marching bravely. Already there was a rumour in the neighbourhood of the family having come in for property. The baker had heard of it; and the milkman, who was of sporting tendencies, had, it was said, advanced a few pounds in backing their claims; while we, who were no doubt the original and genuine Firkinsees, were left entirely in the shade.

And yet all this time we were within half an hour's journey of the former house of Martha Firkin; while, likely enough, her eccentricities would have left some traces in the neighbourhood. The tradesmen with whom she dealt might have preserved some memory of her. At all events,

it would be known if she had left property thereabouts; and all this information we could get without paying fees to Mosby and Co. I was glad of the suggestion, for Martha Firkin was beginning to haunt me. I saw her in my dreams, with a reproachful face, pointing downwards to buried hoards. And so one day we crossed Westminster Bridge, my wife and I, on a tour of investigation.

We approached the Belvedere Road with feelings of strong interest, and found it a wide, but rather gloomy thoroughfare, the houses of a dull red-brick, with long forecourts, many of them occupied by manufacturers on a small scale, but all in a good state of repair. It would have been encouraging to meet with a row of half-a-dozen or so with the windows all broken and a general air of grimy desertion. We should have recognised our Martha in these, and rejoiced. But nothing of the kind met our view. Then there were no shops to enquire at in the street itself, and round the corner they were all so busy and swarming with customers that it seemed almost useless to ask questions among them.

And Martha's own residence—Number Three Hundred and Sixty-five? Well, for a long time it eluded research. We marked down Number Three Hundred and Sixty-four, but after that came a long gap, and then the numbers went back to One Hundred and One. At last, however, we discovered the place, quite round the corner, and seeming to belong to the next street—a house decidedly dingier than the rest, a corner house, with three-cornered arrangements inside, no doubt, and over the door a board with the inscription, "Cassidy, Tailor."

We had agreed beforehand, in case we found Martha's house occupied, to enquire for Miss Martha Firkin, as if we were friends who believed her to be still alive. There was a certain crookedness of conduct in all this which I don't defend. We began badly, as you see. I doubt if we were justified in making use of the poor tailor's letter, which had cost him money, no doubt, without making him some acknowledgment. We were mean, I acknowledge; but then, so is everybody when once the greed of gain sets in. When we have established our claim to the Firkin estates, you will see how noble and generous we shall become.

Anyhow, we knocked boldly, with the decision of people who felt quite at home.

and the door was opened with remarkable promptness by a man in his shirt-sleeves. He bore a strong generic resemblance to our neighbour and fellow-claimant, but it was Cassidy himself, and no connection with the man in our street, who suddenly appeared to us—I fancy he had been watching our proceedings through the shop-window—and demanded our business. We enquired politely for Miss Martha Firkin.

"Yes?" replied the tailor enquiringly; "yes?"

"She lives here, I believe!"

Our firm conviction, I need hardly say, was that she was long ago safely dead and buried, and so you may judge of our thrill of horror when Cassidy replied:

"An' sure she does, and what will be your pleasure?"

"Why, to see her, of course," I stammered, quite taken aback. And then the consideration presented itself: "What on earth could we say to her?—how account for our intrusion upon her privacy?"

"I'll call her down," said Cassidy, and went to the end of the passage, a broad bare passage that opened upon an interior also bare and comfortless, but as clean and neat as the wear and tear of half-a-dozen generations would permit. "Miss Firkin, ye'll be wanted," shouted Cassidy in a voice so elevated that it was evidently intended to reach up a good many pairs of stairs.

Another consideration: if the poor old woman should turn out decrepit and rheumatic, how cruel to drag her down!

But the woman who presently appeared was anything but old and rheumatic. Not young and beautiful, indeed, but middle-aged, and with the yellow face and seamed fingers of a sempstress—evidently one who earned her bread hardly and honestly, keeping want at bay at the point of her needle, but only keeping it at bay, and never putting it to utter rout. And she stood there looking at us rather defiantly than otherwise.

Yes, her name was Martha Firkin, and what did we want with her?

"Simply," I ventured to say, "that, in fact, being of the same name, and passing that way, I thought it possible we might be connected in some way. Was it possible Miss Firkin was any relation of Joshua Firkin, my grandfather, or of Caleb Firkin?"

"Oh dear no," replied Martha sternly, "nothing of the kind. I know nothing at all about the persons you mention."

"Then, Miss Firkin," I rejoined with some severity—for I was a little nettled at the contemptuous way in which she thrust aside what I considered a very flattering suggestion—"then, Miss Firkin, pray what relation are you to the Martha Firkin who died at St. Thomas's Hospital?"

I had her there, and hit her, so to say, in naval parlance, betwixt wind and water. The woman turned pale, leant against the door-post for support. My wife gave me a nudge and whispered:

"There's a mystery here; we must fathom it."

We were standing on the steps all this time, a flight of high steps leading up to the front door, Martha standing a few feet above us in the doorway, as if to bar the passage. Beyond I could see Mr. Cassidy, his shears in his hand, eyeing the scene in strong curiosity, with furtive glances, and listening with all his ears. Martha spoke again, but slowly and with difficulty:

"I should like to know who told you anything about that."

"I will be quite free and open with you, Miss Firkin," I replied. "I saw an advertisement in the public prints—"

"Ah, that advertisement!" cried Miss Firkin. "I was afraid there would be trouble about it. Oh, and all the trouble I've had, and now— Oh, I hope there's no more coming."

The poor woman seemed so genuinely troubled and distressed that it would have been cruel to have asked her any more questions; but she presently volunteered a further statement.

The Martha Firkin in question was her mother, and she had been run over by a cab, and taken to St. Thomas's Hospital, where she died.

"And left no will, then?" asked Amy, who had followed the conversation with lively interest.

"A will! Poor mother leave a will! Why, she had nothing to leave, poor thing."

"Really, Miss Firkin," pursued Amy rather bitterly, "there's something about this we can't understand at all. If you are Mrs. Firkin's daughter, and if there was nothing to leave, why do they put advertisements in the paper for next-of-kin, giving people all kind of trouble for nothing?"

"It wasn't my doing, ma'am," cried Martha, almost ready to cry, "and I am sure I am very sorry to inconvenience any—"

body; but indeed I had nothing to do with putting in the advertisement. That was Mr. Caraway's doing."

And Mr. Caraway, it seemed, kept a shop close by in the Lambeth Road, and Martha assured us that he would give us full information. And so we parted with Miss Firkin, who watched us from her vantage point in the doorway, as did Cassidy from his window, till we had vanished round the corner.

Now Mr. Caraway's name was soon visible in gilt letters over a shop-front devoted to groceries on one side, and to the business of a post and money-order office and savings-bank on the other, and Caraway himself was discovered inside, distracted between the various duties of making up Her Majesty's mails, and making up packets of tea and sugar for Her Majesty's subjects. However, he could spare a moment for the affairs of Miss Firkin. A very creditable young woman, he said, and a seat-holder in the chapel of which he was one of the deacons. But as for the old lady who was dead he knew very little about her, only that her daughter supported her and clothed her and everything. But still the old lady had a little hoard of her own; how she came by the money nobody knew, unless that she managed to "collar" a few pence every now and then when she went to buy things for her daughter. "But there it was," said Mr. Caraway. "Every week or two she'd bring me a shilling and pop it into the post-office savings-bank. And Miss Firkin knew nothing at all about it, not till the old lady died, when the bank-book was found, and there," said Caraway impressively, "was a matter of ten pounds laid up." Alas for our vanished millions! Had it come down so low as this? "And when Miss Firkin wanted to draw out her late mother's money," continued Caraway, "the Government remarked, What proof is there that the claimant is next-of-kin? And then began a Bother."

Caraway made a very big B of that bother, and, indeed, seemed to have suffered a good deal between the requirements of the administration and the claims of Martha Firkin. "For whatever it might have been," pursued Caraway, "there was something wrong about her register. Perhaps the old lady had passed under a wrong name, perhaps she had never had her daughter put down. And so the Government allowed," summarised Caraway, "that if an advertisement were inserted in the

papers, addressed to next-of-kin, and no claimants appeared within three months, Martha should have the money. And Martha got it. And Martha by this time no doubt has spent it. But if there's going to be any Bother about it," cried Caraway indignantly, "why, I shall resign my office, that's all!"

But we hastened to assure Mr. Caraway that as far as we were concerned there should be no bother. About our neighbour, however, of Number Sixty-eight, I am not so certain. He has not looked so radiant of late, and seems to be working away to make up for lost time. And there is now a ray of suspicion in the glance he throws at me. Perhaps he has heard of my visit to the Belvedere Road, and suspects me of having made away with the Firkin millions!

THE TEACHERS' ORGAN.

WHATEVER there may be in sound, there is no bull in sense in saying that in the present day the schoolmaster is very much abroad at home. The application of the law of "must" to the elementary education of the country created an unprecedented demand for teaching power, and under the stimulus of advanced rates of remuneration the supply speedily overtook the demand; and now once more easily—too easily the "profession" assert—keeps pace with its normal increase. The certificated teachers in actual practice—including schoolmistresses as well as schoolmasters—number roundly thirty-five thousand. They may, therefore, fairly be described as a numerous body, and they are disposed to regard themselves as an important and powerful body also. Important enough to entitle their professional interests to public consideration, and powerful enough to make a good fight for their own hand where the maintenance of those interests is concerned. They have organised themselves into a "National Union," with an elaborate executive council, and a paid secretary, who is a member of the School Board for London, and, following the fashion of the day, they have established their own organ—The Schoolmaster. This journal is a penny weekly, and has by far the largest circulation of any educational newspaper. That circulation is, however, so exclusively professional that the paper is caviare to the general. Nevertheless, it presents many points of interest, and it is

with these that we propose to deal here, for the information and entertainment of our readers.

The Schoolmaster is emphatically and literally a journal for teachers, written by teachers. It is, moreover, edited and managed by teachers, and the general body of the teachers in the shape of an Educational Newspaper Company Limited, own it, and in it own a paying property. It is not, however, as a property but as an organ that it is chiefly valued, for the facilities and authority which it affords for making known, or putting upon record the views of the profession upon educational questions generally, and teachers' questions in particular. One of its prime uses is to ventilate grievances. In its pages, therefore, the elementary teacher appears as a much aggrieved man, a veritable Ishmaelite of the educational world. Like other trade journals it takes in a general way a "nothing like leather tone," its line being broadly that teachers as a body can do no wrong, while School Boards, or the Educational Department can scarcely do anything right. Against the Department and all its works, and more particularly all its inspectors, the teacher, as represented by his organ, has a whole quiverful of grievances. The catalogue of his complaints against the Board is a large one, and is yearly increasing. As to the "Local Managers" with whom he comes more directly in contact, as being the appointed intermediaries between the Boards and himself, it is less a case of his having grievances against them than of his regarding them as grievances personified. A considerable proportion of the whole sum of wrongs or hardships complained of centre in the one grand charge of red-tapery brought by the teachers against both Department and Boards, and especially against the latter bodies. "My lords" of the Department, and the Boards in their corporate capacity, are constantly calling for the filling in of many-columned forms, or the making out of elaborate reports or returns. This inflicts a large amount of clerical work upon the teachers, a practically endless amount, seeing that they never know what a day may bring forth in the way of new demands for "forms you know." Much of this work they allege is more or less a mere sacrifice to the Juggernaut of Circumlocution, and in this even more than in its quantity lies the sting of the "clerical work" grievance. Reams of prose denunciation of it have appeared in The School-

master, and the aggrieved teacher, like Silas Wegg, occasionally drops into poetry. Perhaps the following extracts from a rhymed lament, will convey to outsiders the best general idea of the character of the grievance here in question :

'Twas Saturday night, and a teacher sat
Alone his task pursuing,
He averaged this, and he averaged that,
Of all that his school was doing.

He reckoned percentage so many boys
And so many girls all counted,
And marked the tardy and absentees,
And to what all the absence amounted.

Names and residence wrote in full,
Over many columns and pages.
He marked who had pass'd the standard before,
And averaged all the ages.

The date of admission of every one,
With cases of flagellation,
And filled up the schedule with those who should
pass
At the coming examination.

Before half of his heavy task was done,

His weary head sank low on his book,
And his weary heart still lower,
As he thought that his pupils had little brains,
And he could not furnish them more.

He slept, he dreamed, it seemed he died,
And his spirit to Hades went,
And they met him with the question fair,
"How much can you pass per cent.?"

And when they suggested a hundred and ten,
And he modestly said "I can't,"
They changed the form of the query then,
"Can you earn the extra grant?"

He shook his head. They could hardly tell
What should be his proper position;
But at last they gave him a ponderous book,
'Twas the Register of Admission.

He keeps the register so well, that after many years he is, as a reward, granted a half-holiday, which he devotes to revisiting earth.

He came to the spot where they buried his bones;
The ground was nearly built over,
And labourers digging threw out a skull
Once buried beneath the clover.

A disciple of Galen passing by
Paused to look at the diggers,
He picked up the skull and looked through the eye,
And saw it was lined with figures.

"Just as I thought," said the young M.D.,
"How easy it is to tell 'em,
'Statistics ossified every fold
Of cerebrum, and cerebellum.'"

"It's a great curiosity, sure," says Pat;
"By the bones can you tell the creature?"
"Oh, nothing strange," said he, "that's the skull
Of a nineteenth century teacher."

When the grievance-goaded teacher does drop into poetry his verse is generally in the ironical vein. Thus, when in 1881 the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council of Education abolished physical geography as a grant-earning science subject, and substituted for it the

new and more difficult science of physiography, the chorus of protest and denunciation in *The Schoolmaster* included the following professional effusion:

A BALLAD OF PHYSIOGRAPHY.

Oh, jumble of all 'ologies, oh, mystery intense,
Oh, hotch-potch of the sciences, oh, blunder most immense—

Gigantic obfuscation of the light we long to see—
To limbo we devote thee, horrid Physiographie!

Dear Huxley, good professor, by whom Agnostics swear,
Some people have abused you in a fashion hardly fair;

I'm not one of the number, but I fear I yet may be,
Could I feel sure 'twas you who gave us Physiographie.

We deemed ourselves—well, smart enough, till lately; but alas!

There now exists a subject in which nobody can pass.

Why, Aristotle's self might use some sad profanities,
Should he attempt this year's "advanced" in Physiographie.

And this will happen some day—I am certain that it will—

A mummied form at Kensington an honoured niche will fill

Within the grave museum; and the world will rush to see

The man who took an honours first in Physiographie.

And at some not so distant date when we have time to spare—

Some holiday when good folks all can hang around and stare—

We'll get a jolly bonfire up and burn in effigy
That other man whose demon brain hatched Physiographie.

God speed the good time coming that shall see an end of cram—

The time when science teaching shall be something else than sham;

Meanwhile, like Annie's lover, I could "lay me down an' dee."

Did I but know we'd heard the last of Physiographie.

Eccentricities in the composition or conduct of School Boards are recorded in the *Teachers' Organ* with a sort of grim glee, as justifying an opinion current among the profession, to the effect that oftentimes members of School Boards are fitter subjects for board schools than School Boards.

The case of the Lower Halston School Board is dealt with in a tone of magisterial severity. And certainly it was a wonderful case in its way. The Chairman of the Board was, at the instance of a factory-inspector, convicted on each one of twenty-four summonses for employing boys in contravention of the Factory and Education Acts; one of the boys so employed being the son of the attendance officer of the Board. This Board, it transpired in evidence, consisted of five members, of whom one was in the employ of the convicted chairman, while another could

neither read or write. It is only reasonable to assume that a wholly uneducated School Board member is a very exceptional personage. But to judge from the reports of board meetings reproduced from local journals in the *Teachers' Organ*, it would appear that ill-educated members of School Boards—members of the type more particularly hit at as being more fit for board schools than School Boards—are pretty freely scattered about. One result of this, as shown in the "records of proceedings," is the use at board meetings of a good deal of Billingsgatesian language, and the misuse of the Queen's English generally, and of poor letter H in particular. When, as occasionally happens, educational ignorance is combined with educational pretension, the effect produced seems really comic to the professional mind. Thus, the speech of a member of the board of a certain manufacturing town having been termed stale, he retorted that he "would give it back" to the opposing speaker, "in the plural number, and tell him that his speech was staler."

Upon such non-official incidents, as for example that of a member of a School Board being arrested for poaching, the *Teachers' Organ* touches lightly and good-humouredly. But where boards or members thereof so conduct themselves in connection with their office, as to show them to be unfitted for it, the teachers, through their organ, pillory the offenders, and exclaim in effect: "And these be your (Educational) kings, O Israel! These be the manner of men who are placed in authority over the teachers of the land." It is only fair to say that it is generally the smaller, more insignificant boards which furnish *The Schoolmaster* with the "horrid examples" of this kind, from which it points a moral. With the larger, more important boards, the organ is nothing if not critical, but its criticisms, though often strong, are generally argumentative also, and always becomingly respectful.

One feature of the *Teachers' Organ* is a "legal" column which is devoted to recording law cases bearing upon or interesting to the scholastic profession. Through the branches of the National Union of Elementary Teachers (famously known as the N. E. U. T.) the paper has correspondents in all parts of the kingdom. It is therefore in a position to bring together not merely those cases which are published in the great daily newspapers, but those also which are published only in

smaller provincial prints, or others which may not have been previously published in any paper. Cases are given of odd or conflicting decisions under the Educational bye-laws, of actions brought by teachers for wrongful dismissal, or by managers for the recovery of school-fees, or the like. But the most frequently recurring cases are the summonses for assaults alleged to have been committed by or upon teachers.

The assaults charged against teachers are held to consist in improper or excessive chastisement of pupils; in their having employed some instrument of punishment other—and more dangerous—than the cane, or used the cane with a severity exceeding the needs or objects of legitimate discipline. The assaults upon teachers are committed by hot-headed parents, who, scorning the law's delays, seek the wild justice of revenge, and attempt to "pay out" in kind, the instructors who have felt themselves called upon to thrash their children.

As a rule the so-called assaults, whether upon pupils or teachers, are slight or merely technical. Their real interest as matters for magisterial investigation lies in their bearing upon, and illustration of, the question of corporal punishment. This is a question in which the public as well as the profession is interested, and it is one upon which School Boards are not only greatly exercised, but greatly divided. There is some division of opinion upon the subject even among teachers, and it is a stock subject of discussion in the pages of their organ. There are individual teachers who say that they can and do maintain the discipline of their schools without resort to corporal punishment. The profession as a body, however, are in favour of that form of punishment, and are inclined to sneer at, to set down as "goody-goody," the dissenting few who say that it can be done without. The majority go upon the principle of the old rhyme:

Solomon said, in accents mild,
Spare the rod and spoil the child;
Be they man or be they maid,
Whip 'em and wallop 'em, Solomon said.

While children are not creatures too bright and good for human nature's daily food, while they are what they are, what on the whole it is desirable they should be—while they are thus, the cane, it is argued, must still form part of our school apparatus. Those who would abolish corporal punishment would discountenance only that particular form of penance, and upon them it is retorted that their remedies would be

worse than the disease. Their substituted punishment, their keeping-in, extra task-work, exhibition in the character of a horrid example, or constant lecturing, or verbal denunciation—these so-called milder methods would, it is contended, be more injurious to a child, mentally, morally, and physically, than a fair caning would be. At the same time it is admitted that the power to administer corporal punishment has been and may be occasionally abused, and it is acknowledged that it should be used as rarely and sparingly as possible. So that, the present opinion of the profession notwithstanding, we will hope that at no very distant date a day will come when teachers will be able to hang up their canes and flog no more. Meanwhile it is as well to know what are their existing views upon this much-vexed question of corporal punishment.

For outsiders the most interesting and characteristic feature of the Teachers' Organ would probably be the correspondence. The editorials of the paper are often written in the "scathing" style, but it is as a correspondent that the teacher comes out strongest. Individually the teachers are nothing if not emphatic, when discussing, in their own organ, their professional rights or wrongs—especially the wrongs. It is in the correspondence pages that the Department and its inspectors, the boards and their managers come in for their hardest knocks and names. But if the teachers speak evil of dignities, if they do not spare the officials whom they regard as their natural enemies, neither do they spare each other when they come to discuss questions upon which they are divided among themselves. Thus in a "Contributed" article, entitled, A Philosophical Study, the personal appearance and official manners and customs of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools were elaborately criticised in the "alaahing" vein. The object of the "study" was denounced as a bully, a tyrant, a pottering fidget, and was dubbed "Mr. Puzzle, H.M.I."

To the initiated this fancy name was really no disguise. The whole profession knew which particular inspector was meant, and for a week or two after the appearance of the article the correspondence columns of the organ contained a chorus of approval of the "slating" of "Mr. Puzzle." But presently there came a lull in the storm, and one teacher ventured to suggest that even "Mr. Puzzle" might not be all evil,

that probably there might be some fault or short-coming upon the part of those who failed to achieve success under his inspectorata. Whereupon the writer of the letter was severely taken to task by another correspondent who took the significant signature of "Anti-Crawler." There is an unmistakable ring of trades-unionism about this signature, and as a matter of fact the elementary teachers are a strongly trade-unionist body. It is not merely that they have their National Union, they are imbued with the spirit and ideas of unionists. How to deal with the oversupply of teaching power is a theme constantly being discussed in their organ. The numbers flocking to the profession, it is asserted, has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished, and the Education Department is greatly blamed for affording what its critics call side entrances to the teacher's calling.

Even among the certificated there are teachers, and teachers. Teachers who are "trained and certificated," and teachers who are only certificated. The former class are those who, in addition to having served their articles as pupil-teachers, have been through a training college. The latter are ex-pupil-teachers, or "acting" teachers, who have sat for their certificate examination under conditions arranged by the Education Department, to meet the circumstances or views of those who lack either the means or the inclination to obtain college training. The trained assume not only that they are the most fully and legitimately commissioned teachers, but also that they are, that they of necessity must be, the best teachers. This last assumption, the untrained, the side-entrance, men dispute. They argue that two years spent in actual practice as assistant-teachers is to the full as good training as any that can be acquired during an equal period of semi-monastic life in college. This quarrel of trained versus untrained is a very pretty one as it stands, and we merely cite it here as being a subject upon which the teachers in their own organ come out strong.

The correspondence columns of the organ are not, however, wholly devoted to the discussion of vexed questions. They serve for the setting forth of all sorts of odd or individual grievances, as, for instance, that of the teacher who writes to complain that his butter comes from his tradesman wrapped in used 'Forms Forty'—Form Forty being the form upon which applications for employment

as teachers under the London Board are made, and in which the official—and to a certain extent the private—history of applicants is recorded in great detail. Again it serves to bring under the notice of the profession generally appeals for help for individual members overtaken by special misfortune. Another use to which the correspondence portion of the organ is put is that of warning teachers at large against impostors, who are working, or attempting to work, the teaching profession. As such warnings describe the personal appearance and *modus operandi* of the particular performer denounced, they generally have the effect of spoiling sport for him, and in one instance at any rate such a warning led to the sharper being laid by the heels, as the following characteristic letter from a village dominie will testify :

"AN IMPOSTOR CAUGHT.

"SIR,—I wish to acknowledge my thanks to the writer of that letter which appeared in your issue a few weeks back, cautioning teachers against an impostor. This same impostor presented himself at my school amongst others in this district, and told his tale. He little thought, however, that as he tried to pour it down my throat, our worthy policeman, who had been placed on his track, was swallowing it all through the key-hole. He was at once taken into custody, and received the well-deserved sentence of seven days' hard labour.—Yours truly."

The metaphor here is perhaps not a very happy one, seeing that a tale is rather taken in by the ear than poured down the throat; but the touch of "our worthy policeman" seems to us almost worthy of the Vicar of Wakefield.

The Teachers' Organ has its weekly announcements of births, marriages, and deaths; and when the teachers named in them are trained, there is added to the information usually given in such announcements, their college, and years of residence in it. In this way, old college chums hear of each other again in after-life, and recollections of college friendships and college adventures are revived. Following the births, marriages, and deaths, comes a "Presentation" column, in which are recorded the presentations made to teachers, on their marrying, obtaining promotion, changing school, retiring from active service, and the like, and here again old friends or competitors obtain passing glimpses of each other's progress in life.

In addition to these features, the organ likewise briefly reports the festive as well as the official gatherings of teachers in all parts of the country. It will be seen, therefore, that it has a social as well as a technical interest for the teaching profession.

Did space permit, some curious bits might be culled from the advertisement pages of the Teachers' Organ. Here, however, it must suffice to say that the advertisements—which are very numerous—consist chiefly of "Situations Wanted," "Situations Vacant," and announcements of new books and other school apparatus. Could the latter class of advertisements be taken without a grain of salt, the old saying that there is no royal road to learning might well be regarded as obsolete. But, alas! advertisements are but—advertisements. The road to learning, though perhaps smoother than of yore, is still a thorny one, the multiplication and improvement of mechanical means of education notwithstanding.

To the elementary teachers of the kingdom their organ is a valuable possession. It has done yeoman's service alike to them and to the cause of that popular education with which they are practically associated. As a work of their own creation, they have reason to be proud of it, while the outer public would find it more attractive—less purely shoppy and more generally interesting—than most other trade organs.

WAITING.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

CHAPTER II.

"YOU are sure, quite sure, Steph, that the poor young man is altogether quite—well, it seems heartless to doubt it, after his perilous escape—but do you feel positive that he is a gentleman?"

Mrs. Stephen Northlington was reposing on a wicker-work sofa, which had been placed on a shady spot on the lawn. She was splendidly dressed in an embroidered muslin gown, rings sparkled on her fingers, and the daintiest of lace caps was perched on her pretty brown curls. Stephen, peacefully blowing curls of smoke into the air, was seated on a comfortable chair at her side, while a few yards off, her two small sons—one of whom could only just walk alone—were chasing Aunt Dora round the flower-beds.

Stephen was in that calm self-satisfied

frame of mind not uncommon among prosperous people with whom the world wags merrily. He had just had a thoroughly satisfactory interview with his bailiff, who had made a first-rate bargain about fat beasts. The weather was lovely, even the bailiff had not been able to grumble at the state of the crops; the young fellow down at Turner's was going on well; and his (Stephen's) cigar was of a peculiarly fragrant and aromatic quality.

Mrs. Stephen had a faint high-pitched voice and a trick of emphasising a word here and there.

"Are you quite sure, Steph?" she asked again, as she received no immediate answer to her question.

"Oh yes! I beg your pardon, my love." Stephen put down his cigar and was all attention. His thoughts had been dwelling on his conversation with the bailiff. "The young artist, you mean—what's his name? I've quite forgotten. Dalton, I think Turner said it was; and he did tell me himself. A gentleman? Yes; I should say so decidedly, though he tells me he is an artist by profession—some connection of my old tutor's up at college. His relations live in the north, and put him into iron works, or cotton, and he couldn't stand it. Don't wonder, I'm sure," continued Stephen, with his fingers in his waistcoat-pocket; "terribly dull career for a young fellow of good family."

"Then he is of good family?"

"Yes, by all means; his father was—upon my word, Fanny, it's escaped my memory what his father was, but it doesn't much matter, you'll be able to talk to him yourself when he comes to stay for a few days."

"I'm really relieved," said Fanny in her bird-like tones, "to hear that he is a gentleman. It might have been so bad for the children if he had not been quite—quite—you understand—the example."

"I don't suppose he'll find his way to the nursery," observed Stephen soothingly.

"No, not that; but the general tone. Children are so quick to pick up and observe anything fresh, especially boys. It was only yesterday that little Steph asked nurse—"

"I beg your pardon, my dear, but can you see who that is talking to Dora over the sunk fence? I believe it's Turner, and I have a dozen things I want to tell him about the new flower-beds. Your eyes are much better than mine."

"I rather think it is too tall for Turner.

But any way he has gone round to the gate, so I suppose he is coming in."

"Very likely. By-the-bye, my dear, do you believe that Wyatt will remember to speak about those plants before he leaves town?"

In the meantime Dora and her nephews had made themselves thoroughly hot and tired with running, so they sat down to rest on a bank that looked towards the sunk fence. On the other side of the hedge was a hay-field, through which a narrow path had been made by the people who came from the village to The Chestnuts.

Dora wore a light summer dress. She had dropped her hat at an early period of the game, and her hair had been decorated by the busy fingers of little Stephen. Having stuck a spray of geranium on either side of her head, Stephen sat down to rest with his arm round Aunt Dora, coaxed into good behaviour by the promise that she would tell him the story of the three bears.

"Once upon a time——" began Dora.

"Baby's going to sleep," interrupted Stephen.

"Never mind, baby is too little to care about stories; wait till he's quiet, and then I'll begin."

Stephen waited for perhaps two minutes, then burst out with:

"Aunt Dora, begin; baby's 'sleep."

"No, no; no sleep," shouted baby, sitting bolt upright on Dora's lap with preternaturally wide-open eyes; "me 'wake."

"Then I'll sing you a little song instead of telling you a story, and baby will like that too."

"Yes," said baby, while Stephen, perfectly satisfied, sidled still closer to Aunt Dora, and put a hot little hand out to pat her face.

Dora began valiantly, considering the difficulties of her position, and sang straight through a series of nursery rhymes:

"Queen Anne, Queen Anne, she sits in the sun,
As fair as a lily, as——"

"Aunt Dora!" exclaimed Stephen, whose h's were slightly erratic, "there's a man looking over the 'edge, his arm's tied up."

Dora looked up quickly. A young man with a stick and his arm in a sling was standing in the hay-field contemplating the little group with serious eyes; a tall slight man with delicately-cut features and a small silken beard: he wore his hair rather

long; his necktie was not of a conventional cut.

"The invalid artist, of course! How silly of me to forget that he was coming to call to-day!"

The stranger raised his hat, and paused, uncertain whether he should address the young lady, or find his way round to the front door.

Dora blushed crimson, becoming conscious of her crumpled dress and untidy hair; she struggled to her feet, baby still in her arms, and Stephen clinging on to her dress.

Something in the graceful attitude, and in her excessive embarrassment, caused the stranger to linger by the hedge, while little Stephen broke the ice by shouting:

"Who are you, man?"

"Hush, Steph!" said Dora; "that is not the way to speak at all."

"I really must apologise for disturbing you, it was quite unintentional," he said in a clear musical voice. "I'm afraid I am trespassing here, but I understood from my good friend Turner that this was the short-cut to The Chestnuts."

"You are perfectly right. There is a gate a few yards lower down; if you will go straight on we will open it for you."

"Not for the world. Do not let me trouble you, I shall find my way."

He raised his hat again, and walked on, while Dora took herself to task for her ungraciousness, and Stephen announced calmly in his ringing tones: "Man gone, now aunty must sing." But there was no more singing for little Steph that afternoon, nor could he persuade Aunt Dora to sit down again on the grassy bank. No, they must all go in and have tea.

"Man back again," said he, before they had gone many steps towards the house, and this time Dora stopped for the stranger to come up to them, and held out her hand.

"My brother will be so pleased to see you," she said shyly; "he was—we all were so distressed to hear of your mishap. I do hope you are better."

"Indeed I am, thanks to all the kindness I have met with. I wish I could have come before to express my thanks to Mr. Northlington. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mrs. Northlington?"

He did not think so for a moment, having already heard many minute descriptions of the family from Mrs. Turner's garrulous lips, but he hazarded the remark in hopes of calling up another blush on the

face of this lovely Queen Anne, who sat singing in the sunshine, utterly unconscious of effect, with a small boy on either side of her, and a bunch of scarlet in her hair.

"No; my sister-in-law is in the garden just above, and my brother too. There, Steph, go and tell papa that Mr. Dalton is here."

"May I be allowed to ask your name?"

"Dora Northlington."

She looked up, it was impossible for her to avoid seeing the admiration that was written in Walter Dalton's eyes. They were beautiful eyes, dark and dreamy, and his face was that of an intelligent man.

His next observation was commonplace enough.

"What a charming place this is, Miss Northlington. I have been so much indoors the last week or so, that it is a real pleasure to be walking under the green trees again; you can sympathise with a painter's feelings, I am sure."

"I don't paint at all," murmured Dora; "but——"

"You are very happy in not doing so," interrupted Walter Dalton, who, in truth, much as he liked listening to the conversation of a beautiful woman, still better loved the sound of his own voice. Had he not for three long weeks been deprived of an appreciative audience? For three long weeks he had been cut off from all intercourse with cultivated minds, for, in his notion, the country doctor was but a rural savage, and in the hurried visits of Stephen Northlington he had hardly found a sympathising element. "I am sure you have a mind that can feel and grasp the beauties around us more vividly than we poor workers, who in the end often realise the impossibility of the task we undertake in trying (however humbly) to paint Nature."

Walter put out his hand as he spoke towards baby, who was gazing at him with wide-open blue eyes from the safe shelter of Auntie Dora's arms; he had singularly beautiful hands, white and shapely, the one in the sling was helpless, and a slight awkwardness in moving his left hand made it the more conspicuous.

"Ah, baby! you don't understand these grand sentiments, do you? What a fine little fellow he is, Miss Northlington; I should adore him if he belonged to me!"

Walter Dalton was as unconscious of any insincerity in this speech (though he barely knew the names of his own nephews and nieces) as in the other, when he had given Dora to understand that humility was the

stepping-stone by which he hoped to aspire—he, in whose character was no particle of that most desirable quality. His whole life (not such a very long one, for he was only twenty-four) had been given up more or less to pleasing and admiring (in the absence of other worshippers) that talented young man, Walter Dalton. His creed was very simple, and his vanity so complete that it did not at first appear as being the back-bone (as indeed it was) of his character.

On the other hand, he had quick passions; a great love for everything that was graceful and pleasing; he was easily touched, and at the present moment the feeling uppermost in his mind was gratitude for the kindness which he had received from the Northlington family, not unmingled with joy at having escaped from the hands of Mrs. Turner.

He had been gifted with a beautiful face and a soft voice, which made even his most ordinary observations sound as if there were a great deal more behind. He was young, he had narrowly escaped a very severe accident, and, although she did not know it, he was bent upon pleasing her. Was it not, therefore, natural that Dora, who had passed her life among such very different types of humanity, had already come to the conclusion that this Walter Dalton was an exceedingly interesting personage? At any rate he had the knack of making himself at home. Long before afternoon tea was over, Fanny had begged him to stay to dinner, and had cordially seconded her husband's invitation that he should spend the next week or so at The Chestnuts.

Stephen bustled about and brought out more cigars, but Mr. Dalton did not smoke. At least only now and then, not as a habit.

"If you will let me," he said, when Fanny had retired to rest after the fatigues of the day, "I should very much like to look round this exquisite garden of yours."

Praise of his garden was the sure road to win Stephen's heart, and he rose from his seat with alacrity, pointed out the recent improvements, and discussed the shape of the new flower-bed with his visitor, till he was called away to talk to Turner on urgent business.

"I must leave you to Dora," he said, with a half apology, "but she knows all about the garden, horticultural names, and everything, as well as Turner does himself; she is quite my right hand."

It did not appear that Walter's interest

in the science of botany was so very absorbing after all, for he soon turned away from the greenhouse, and begged his companion to take him somewhere out-of-doors where he could sit down and see the view.

"Take me to your favourite seat, I'm sure you have got one. Nobody could live in this enchanting place without fixing upon one particular spot, in which to sit and think."

"I like the fir-trees best," said Dora, "down behind the summer-house, if you can walk so far."

"To be sure I can, and there is no occasion to hurry; that is just the charm to an over-worked Londoner, the being able to rest, and be supremely peaceful as we can here."

Stephen had planted the fir-trees at George Wyatt's advice to shelter the garden from cold winds. Now they had sprung up tall and strong, and Dora had begged for a seat just at the edge of the plantation, from which she could see the sweet-smiling valley and catch a glimpse of the red walls of Trevden Hill. It faced the west, and Dora called it "Sunset Corner."

"This is truly delightful," murmured Walter, with his back against a handsome spruce fir.

"I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy,
To know I'm further off from heaven
Than when I was a boy."

What would I give to have written that! Do you like poetry, Miss Northlington?"

"Yes," answered Dora, rather as if she considered it a taste to be ashamed of.

"I was certain you did. Hark! what a lovely sound that is among the roses—the murmuring of innumerable bees.' Did it ever strike you that there is—there must be—a line of exquisite English to illustrate every sight that enchants us, every sound that we hear? Only life is not long enough to fairly grasp the thought. You are musical, too, Miss Northlington. I can see it in your face. Will you sing to me by-and-by?"

"I will with pleasure, but I have only had a few lessons."

"That does not signify if you have the love of music in your heart; and I heard you singing to your little nephews as I

came through the hay-field. Will you talk to me a little, and tell me about this charming idyllic life that you lead here?"

It did not strike Dora that hitherto there had not been much opportunity for her to talk, inasmuch as Mr. Dalton had monopolised the whole of the conversation, nor was she in any way embarrassed by his strange request.

"We came to The Chestnuts about eight years ago, when I was a little girl, and till last summer I always did my lessons—not very regularly, though, as Fanny is an invalid, and Stephen often wants me. We don't go out very much in the summer, except, of course, to Trevden Hill. You can see it, can't you? That's partly why I love Sunset Corner, because you can see the house, and I think it is the most beautiful place in the world."

"Is that where Mr. Wyatt lives?"

"Yes. He is our oldest and best friend. It would be dull for me sometimes if he weren't here. He taught me to ride, and he brings me new books, and once he invited a friend of his to stop—an Italian—on purpose to give me singing-lessons."

"Mr. Wyatt was most civil in calling upon me after my accident," observed Walter in a matter-of-fact tone, rather as if he were bored by this account of Mr. Wyatt's perfections.

"He always is kind, and he was so distressed about you! He's away now in London, but we expect him back again very soon."

"Oh! By-the-bye, Miss Dora—will you forgive me for calling you so? It seems as if we had known each other a very long time—I believe I have something in my pocket-book that may amuse you."

He produced a long thin sketch-book, and showed her a cleverly-drawn sketch of Mrs. Turner, with her most lachrymose expression of countenance.

"You know who it's meant for?"

Dora clapped her hands, and declared it to be an excellent likeness; then she asked to see another drawing, and that proved to be a sketch of the house where his uncle, the iron-founder, lived.

"An old Goth," explained Walter as he turned over the leaves with his left hand, "who is furious with me because I did not like his business. Imagine to yourself, Miss Dora, what it would be for me to sit in an office all day, surrounded with chimneys, and to come home to my villa residence, 'pricking a Cockney ear,' to find a wife without an 'h' awaiting my arrival."

"Stephen told us something about it," said Dora, to whom this picture appeared terrible indeed; "but I hoped—we all thought that you had decided upon being an artist. You must be very clever, to be able to draw those lovely little sketches."

Walter bowed.

"I have chosen another path, certainly, but it is quite a question whether I shall succeed. I am a most unfortunate man, Miss Dora. You are so kind that I don't mind telling you that my picture was rejected by the Academy this year. Then I went abroad for a short time." He omitted to say that the foreign trip was a suggestion of the hard-hearted uncle, who had sent him a handsome cheque to defray expenses. "After that I came down into this neighbourhood to sketch, and got run over by the estimable Turner, though I look upon my accident as one of the happiest occurrences of my life."

All this was said in the sweet low voice which Dora found so attractive; she hardly knew what to answer, so she stooped over a rather more finished pencil-drawing—the head of a girl with a low forehead, large eyes, and a simpering mouth—and asked Mr. Dalton who it was.

"That thing?" he said, taking the book out of her hands; "it's too absurd to show you that; it is a fancy head, I did it yesterday afternoon."

"It's a pretty face, but it looks rather silly," observed Dora.

Walter Dalton burst out laughing.

"You are perfectly right, it is silly; I will do a better one to-morrow."

"It is a portrait then?"

"No, not exactly; it is a sketch of a young lady I hear our good Mrs. Turner talk about constantly; in fact, it is what I imagined Miss Dora Northlington to be like, until I had the pleasure of being undeceived."

"How very tired you must be of hearing about me!"

"I admit that I was a little tired of Mrs. Turner's description—singularly wide of the mark it was—so I amused myself with scribbling caricatures. It is sad to think how very unlike they were! I should like to paint you now as you are," he went on with head thrown back, looking at Dora in his dreamy way, as if she were a part of the landscape, "with the fir-trees in the background, and the geraniums in your hair."

"Wouldn't it be better to have fresh ones?" asked Dora with a smile. "I had

forgotten that they were there; little Stephen put them in when we were playing horses hours ago."

"I would not touch them on any consideration; the colour is perfect. Will you give me a sitting to-morrow morning, Miss Dora?"

"When you get quite well, I will; but you ought not to think of using your hand for a long time. Shall we go towards the house now? Fanny will be vexed if I keep you out too long, and Dr. Brown will come and scold to-morrow."

It was very delightful to Walter Dalton to be looked after and cared for in this way by a pretty girl; he almost went the length of wishing that he had been more seriously hurt. It would be very dull in his Kensington lodging after this comfortable country home-life. On the whole he thought that he would not get well too fast.

By the time that George Wyatt returned home, and paid his customary evening visit at The Chestnuts, Walter Dalton was established there as a most welcome guest. He had won the goodwill of both host and hostess, who declared that they had never had a visitor who gave less trouble. He had dropped into their ways from the very first day, and, though he did not seem to be up to much in the walking and riding line, he was never bored, and had always something pleasant to say at dinner about what he had seen and done during the day.

And Dora? She was supremely happy; in her sympathy for the invalid she gave herself boundless trouble to entertain him; a man with a broken arm was so helpless, and then how patient and good he was! She could not help thinking how much more difficult it would have been to amuse Stephen, supposing he were incapacitated in the same way. She devised all kinds of schemes for making the time pass pleasantly for her guest; she was the most unselfish and untiring nurse, running up and down stairs to fetch him books, and singing to him by the hour together; she mixed his paints, and washed his brushes when he would try and paint, and even consented to sit for her portrait as "Queen Anne," scarlet geraniums and all, though this was a process that invariably made her feel shy and uncomfortable. Can we wonder that, long before the roses reached their prime, before Stephen's improvements were finished, or the broken arm entirely healed, simple child-like Dora had drifted slowly but surely into such a deep

friendship for her handsome patient, that when one morning he broke out into passionate utterances of his undying love for her, she put her hands into his, and vowed that she would love him, and him alone, all the days of her life?

"I don't deserve it," she whispered, as they stood together by the gate at the end of the garden; "teach me to be worthy of you. You are so clever and know so much, how is it that you love me?"

How was it? Could he not describe to her the charm of her sweet face with the glorious eyes that were looking at him now so earnestly; could he not tell her how he had learnt to watch for her coming and going; how, in these few short weeks, he had discovered a treasure in the quiet country house, which was such a contrast to his London life? No! of all this he knew nothing. That (as far as it was in him) he really loved Dora, there could be no doubt. He was touched by her devotion and humility, but he had no answer to her question; with all his love, and all his sympathy, he accepted the homage as a matter of course. She was a simple country girl, beautiful—ah, very beautiful!—but it may be that if she had not been so thoroughly aware of his own great qualities he might not have found it out.

They were very happy, walking backwards and forwards on the turnpike-road; making plans for the future when Walter was to be recognised as the great artist and poet of the day; and building innumerable castles in which Walter was to reign supreme, with Dora in the background as a peaceful shadow. He found it quite in the order of things that she should thus place him in the front, and, as for her, she was quite content. To know that he loved her was enough. Up and down they strolled under the shelter of the high hedge, regardless of passing market-carts and labourers, till a clatter of hoofs caused Dora to look up and exclaim:

"There's Mr. Wyatt! I wonder why he doesn't stop at the house."

"He appears to have some important business in hand," observed Walter carelessly, as George Wyatt passed at a quick trot along the lane that led to Trevden Hill, only just raising his hat to Dora by way of salutation.

"Yes, he is always so busy. Stephen says he doesn't know what the people about here would do without him."

"Does he? Now tell me, dearest, what do you think Stephen will say to this

engagement of ours? Must we tell him just at present?"

"Why not?" asked Dora; "he is very fond of you, I know. Only yesterday he said he wished you would come back for the shooting. He is my guardian, you know."

"And consequently might perhaps object—eh, lady fair? We must be sensible, mustn't we? I am afraid," continued King Cophetua, "whether you might not change your mind if Brother Stephen told you to. Dora!" he exclaimed vehemently, "tell me, promise me that whatever they say, whatever this Wyatt says, shall not make any difference to you?"

"Walter," there was the least possible hesitation as she called him by his christian-name for the first time, "I promise you that it shall not. I have told you so before, and I should like you to understand. I should like you really to believe——"

"What is it, darling?"

"I can never change, whatever happens. I shall always love you, always."

Her voice faltered in her earnestness, and the large tears rolled down her cheeks, but they were soon stopped as Walter swore that he believed her, that he would not distress her for the world. So, arm in arm, they two walked past Sunset Corner and the fir-trees where they had sat and talked four short weeks ago.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER VII. MRS. BUNNYCASTLE'S LANDLORD.

It may be safely said that the people who had no money in Becklington Bank enjoyed themselves very much at this time. They had their fill of amazement; they breakfasted, dined, teaed, and supped upon excitement and wonder, and many of them lay awake far on into the night, busy with anticipation of still further marvels to come. That the monotonous surface of life in a country town should be so ruffled was a fact not wholly devoid of pleasure; but even the most rapacious after some new thing were ready to cry, "Hold—enough!" when the suicide of Gabriel Devenant followed so promptly upon the bank robbery. Of course the one

event had grown out of the other. The weak mind of the gloomy recluse had been unable to face calamity. He had become a deserter from the battle of life, lacking courage to meet the enemy.

Jake, feeling that after a day of tearing excitement the mind of man required to be soothed by the contemplation of rural and domestic objects, was stepping (backwards, and in imminent danger of running up against someone) across the market-place the better to observe his fantailed pigeons strutting on the roof, their conceit in no wise diminished by the fact of their feathers being more or less sooty, when the boy suddenly bolted into view with his mouth wide-open, and his eyes like a young lobster's.

"Maister Devenant's been and made away with hisself i' the noight, drowned hisself dead i' the big dyke. His missis pult 'im out, and down hoo come to old Betty Higgins' abeatin' wi' her hands upon t' door like as if it were a doom. Hoo caught Jem Higgins by t' yure o' his yed and tel't him as she'd knock t' loife out of him if he didn't run and fetch Dr. Turtle that directly minute, aye, did hoo; and two lads from Higgins's farm laid holt on a shutter and went along wi' her, and her struck dumb-like and mum-like, and holding on to herself loike as she was about to fall i' pieces; and Dr. Turtle he come, dressed only kind of a way loike t' scarecrow i' our back garden, and runnin' same as if old Matthew were after him for robbin' an orchard," said Abel with a gulp, drawing on his personal experiences for an illustration; "but he couldn't do nothin', and Maister Devenant's leein' stiff and stark; and Bill and Bobby set their noses agen t' windoo, but couldn't see nothin' for t' bloind, and Softie he caught 'em by t' lug and walloped 'em—ay, that did he."

"Served 'em right, too, the varmint," said Jake, "and t' same 'ull be served out to you if you don't get to your work and look sharp about it."

Jake positively refused to be astonished by anything the Boy could tell him. He had, therefore, during the recital of Gabriel Devenant's lamentable end kept his eyes studiously fixed upon his pigeons; and now, for the first time, brought his vision down to bear upon Abel's excited countenance. He even hummed a stave of a Methodist hymn to show how thoroughly cool he was, and how calmly ready he was to receive the news of any other calamity that might have happened in Becklington

during the night as though it were his daily food.

Abel, not a little crestfallen, retired into the back parlour. Jake pushed his brass-rimmed spectacles up to the top of his head, shoved his hands into his pockets, and lounged across the pavement to greet a passing neighbour.

"Is this true what I hear about Maister Devenant?" he said composedly.

"Aye," replied the man; "he's gone to his long home sure enoo', and a damp road he took to 't too. It's all along o' the terrification over t' bank robbery as this has come about. He couldn't face the thing, couldn't Maister Devenant."

For all this show of calm composure, Jake's soul within him was in a ferment of amaze and pain. He had lived in Becklington, boy and man, for nigh upon fifty years, and never known such a time of seething tumult. Who might know whether these stormy portents did not point towards the end of all things and the near approach of the Battle of Armageddon?

Jake took a furtive glance at a certain old and rusty matchlock that was pinned against the wall of the back parlour over the mantelshelf.

True, the kind of arms to be used at the great encounter was a moot point with divines; but it was well to be on the safe side, to keep your spiritual armour bright, and at the same time have some trusty carnal weapon handy.

Abel, catching the furtive glance, and following it, was of a mind to think suicides were the order of the day, and that his master was on desperate thoughts intent. He had much ado to prevent blubbering outright as this frightful suggestion crossed his mind, for Abel loved his little master in spite of all the scolding and ear-pulling that came as part of the day's work, and had been known to challenge young Becklington in the matter of producing "a better soart," or one who sang hymns "wi' a bigger stummick."

It was a relief to Abel when his master went leisurely out of the shop, and out of sight, leaving the matchlock behind.

Gradually Jake quickened his footsteps until he broke into a sort of gentle trot.

He did not take the way that so many were going who had, or could make, an hour to spare; he did not go to stare at the shrouded window of the house among the dykes; he did not go and hang around as many did in the hope of seeing the

authorities arrive to hold enquiry into the circumstances of Gabriel Devenant's death.

He took quite an opposite direction, towards what was called the old town, a crowded district running out in little lanes of very humble dwellings, and dominated over by a big windmill royally seated on an eminence, whirling his big sails round and round as relentlessly as though they formed a wheel of fate and were making or marring the lives of men.

When Sunday came, and the sails were still, a Sabbath stillness seemed to be over everything; a line drawn definitely and broadly between the week-days and the day of rest. The miller was of the Methodist persuasion, and looked upon by that body as a man of weight; whereas Jake (a zealous member of the same sect) was regarded as a man of energy, and—as is, alas! often the case with great men—the two had more than once, to the secret satisfaction of the less eminent, shown signs of mutual jealousy and distrust.

The miller was a strict Sabbatarian, and, on a Sunday, if he looked at the mill at all, he looked at it as if he rather thought it belonged to some one else. Nor would he tolerate the most delicately-veiled allusion to business on the "seventh day;" which did not, however, prevent him driving the hardest of bargains on other days.

He owned many of the houses round about the mill, and was looked upon as a "stiff'un" in regard to rent; in fact you were esteemed wise to save your breath to cool your porridge—if you had any to cool—rather than waste it in entreaties for gentle dealing from the miller, you being unfortunate enough to find yourself in his power.

Now Mrs. Bunycastle, the shabby widow of whom we have spoken, lived in one of these little houses near the mill, and owned the miller as a landlord, and it was thither, all breakfastless as he was, that Jake had betaken himself so hurriedly. It would perhaps be hard to say why the story of Gabriel Devenant's death had thus induced him to leave the boy to play the mischief with the coffee and run to unhallowed excess in buttering the toast; maybe the remembrance of the drawn white face beneath the widow's cap had set him wondering if this one too might not find life a thing too hard and cruel to be endured.

Anyway, here he was, his apron flapping in the breeze and concealing all deficiencies in the way of legs, as he came up the gentle incline that led towards the mill.

"Has noo dot any more jam pies, Mr. Toomaker?" cried the youngest and smallest child, toddling to meet him as soon as she espied him.

"Patch" no doubt would have reproved this grasping spirit in his little sister, but that he had enough to do to hold on tight to his mother's hand and look up earnestly into her face, as she stood opposite a tall whitened figure that looked many sizes too big for the tiny room. Every time the miller (for it was he) stirred hand or foot, little grains of flour fell from his clothes, as if he was a gigantic snow-man and about to melt.

But there was little else of the melting mood about the miller.

He had stepped round to remind his tenant that it chanced to be rent-day—as if there was any chance of her forgetting a fact with which she had been keeping vigil face to face through the long sleepless hours of the night.

"I know it is rent-day," she said, trembling as she spoke; "I should have gone to the bank to draw the money this very morning. I should, indeed, if it hadn't been——"

"That's as you like, Mrs. Bunycastle," said the miller, making quite a small snow-storm of himself as he walked to the window, nodded to Jake, and whistled a stave of Rule Britannia between his teeth. "I don't care where people keep their money as long as they don't keep it from them to whom it's justly doo," he observed presently, as if he were enumerating a noble sentiment that redounded vastly to his credit; "and I'll call round, as I said before, when I've done my day's work."

"But I say, miller," put in Jake, "don't you know t' bank's stopped, and the poor soul conna get her bit o' money to-day? Happen she'll never get it."

"My mill ain't stopped, and that's all as consarns me, Neighbour Jake. I'm a man as minds my own business and don't meddle."

"But this sin as has been sinned i' the midst on us isn't her sin," continued Jake, growing eloquent. "Give her time—a few days' grace. Happen things 'ull turn out better nor folks fancy; happen there'll be summat saved."

"I'll have my rent by sunset, as the law

declares it doo, or I'll put the brokers in y sunrise, come to-morrow. I'm a just man; I take what I've right to, and want no more."

"Try bein' a mercifoo' mon once in a ray. Change is good for us a', and there's s much about him as about t'other chap 'Scripter," said Jake, feeling that the gift f words was on him, and no mistake. Give her time, neighbour—give her ime."

The miller looked hard and breathed ard at the little cobbler, thought he saw is chance of slipping him inside a cleft tick, and took it.

"If thee'lt go surety for her, i' front of wo witnesses, to pay double rent this day month, I'll give her the month's grace and ave the roof as she conna pay for over er head."

The child whom the widow held by he hand left his mother's side and came reeping round to Jake, finally catching old of one side of the bronzed apron and olding on like a young leech.

"Done wi' you!" cried Jake, clapping ne hand in the other. "I'll be round at our place at one o' the clock, so have our witnesses i' readiness. I'm a po'r man, but I can work extry, and t' fall of he year's best time for folk gettin' their oots fettle for winter, and orderin' new nes for Sundays."

But flour, not shoes and boots, being the iller's business, that worthy had taken imself off before Jake got to the end of is sentence.

As to Mrs. Bunycastle, she had entirely ubsided into herself and a rickety arm-hair by the fire.

"It is so little—so little!" sobbed the widow, wringing her hands. "Surely it ould be worth no one's while to take the widow's mite."

"It all went along wi' the lot, I eckon," said Jake, "like big and little shes i' a net, and favour showed to one."

"He held my hand in his," went on the oor woman, punctuating her sentences rith sobs, "and 'Tilda,' says he, 'it's ut a little, but it will keep a roof over our head.'"

"That was very kind and thoughtful n him," put in Jake, feeling that a few omplimentary words anent the deceased unycastle were called for; "he must ave bin a good soart of a chap, must unycastle, and a sorry loss to you nd the little 'uns; but crying over spilt

milk never gathered it up i' the can again."

Then, suddenly conscious that his appli- cation of the proverb was indiscreetly vague, since it might apply either to the widow's mite or the departed Bunycastle, Jake hastily took himself off.

True, he went home with an added burden on his lean shoulders, but cheered by the reflection that he had been of help in time of need.

And it really did seem as if the little cobbler's good angel were on the alert, for three or four country orders—big ones, too—came in before noon, while the boy developed a scornful demeanour towards his fellows, feeling the reflected importance of such a run of trade.

Jake sat stitching away on his low, broad, backless bench, giving a glance at the bank every now and then, and at the loiterers on the look-out for anything that might happen, many of them glad of an excuse to neglect their legitimate work, and wet the throats that grew dry with expectation at the bar of The Safe Retreat. Jake was not one of that sort. According to his ideas the day previous had been a thing altogether too unprecedented and stupen- dous to admit of divided attention. No man—no matter what his professional en- thusiasm—could have heeled a shoe, or soled a boot, in the midst of such a turmoil as made the old market-place for all the world like a cauldron full of boiling water.

But the worst was known now; the people of Becklington had been asked to wait, and had given their word to wait, and the way for an honest man to wait was to do his work and see to his family.

Why, Amos Callender was down in the tan-yard half an hour earlier than his wont that morning, and Bess had a dish of smoking-hot black-puddings to cheer him up and keep his mind off troublous matters, all ready for dinner when he got back home.

"If you're down on your luck, you're down on your luck," said the honest tanner; "but you've no occasion to roll on it, and wallow in it like a pig i' mire. It's best to find yer feet and go ahead a bit, if so be as yo can."

And he was as good as his word too, helping many another to put a brave face on matters, and take patience till all should be made manifest.

But we are wandering from Jake stitch- ing away for dear life, and feeling as if

every stitch, tightened to extremity of tension, was a fraction put by towards that double rent for which he was to go surety before two witnesses at one of the clock.

As he worked he sang, even as Hilda—poor Hilda—had lilted over her stocking-mending the morning before. But not like any sucking dove sung Jake, no half-hearted melody was his. He had a fine rasping voice, with a low tremulous note coming in every now and then, as a stitch had to be tightened.

The ditty that he sung was no languorous love-song, but a lordly song of triumph, a Methodist psalm of the most pronounced type:

My foes my footstool Thou shalt make,
And from their necks the stiffness take,
While I, on glory, full of pride,
As on a horse shall straddling ride.

Was the foe whose downfall Jake thus foretold a man who wore a flour-powdered coat, and earned his living by grinding corn? Who may say? Assuredly Jake sang with an edifying air of conviction, and as though that royal progress on a prancing steed of the name of Glory were a pageant even then passing before his mind's eye.

Many turned to look at the singer: one lingered, leaning against the low door of the shop, and daintily taking a pinch from a silver snuff-box. It was Dr. Turtle.

"A fine song that, Jake," he said; "but hardly suitable to the times we live in—eh?"

"I reckon it's fitter than you'd think for," answered Jake, bringing his awl to a standstill, and resting an elbow on his knee. "You see, doctor, times is bad—bad as bad. Well, the voice within me says: 'Jake, my fine fellow, rise above 'em, cast summat in their teeth, happen they'll flee before thee.'"

"Jake, you're a philosopher," said the doctor, taking another pinch, and gracefully waving his hand to a passing acquaintance.

"I don't know about that," said Jake, somewhat doubtful of phraseology too deep for him; "but I like a rousing song when I'm about it. Most of all I like a rouser when my heart's i' my boots, run down so low it conna get no lower, loike t' weight i' the big clock over there when 't wants windin' up. Well, yon's a psalm as 'ud wind up any man, if it's sung as it should be."

"It certainly holds out a cheerful prospect to the singer," said the doctor, with a

twinkle in his eye that Jake made believe not to notice.

"Well, doctor," he said, "when things be bad around, it's a help to look ahead and see the sun a shinin'. I tell you what it is," went on Jake, shoving his spectacles up among his hair, and looking round to make sure the boy wasn't listening; "things i' Becklington be about as bad as they can be. I was minded this mornin' to think as the end of all things was at hand."

"The end of the world?" said the doctor.

"Ay," said Jake, "the end o' the world, and a' things in 't."

Dr. Turtle shook his head smilingly.

"No, no, Jake; let us not think such thoughts as these, with that fair young creature standing on the threshold of a long and glorious reign."

Here he took a long and emphatic pinch from the silver box, and drew a long and emphatic breath.

"Is it Queen Victory you're driving at?" said Jake, with his head on one side like an inquisitive bird. "Her as wur crowned i' the month when t' roses were a penny a bunch every market-day?"

"Yes, yes," cried the doctor with enthusiasm; "crowned in the month of roses—a foreshadowing, Jake, of the rosy pathway her feet are destined to tread."

"There's some of her subjec's as ain't havin' a rosy time of it just now down this way, anyhow," said Jake. "I reckon Queen Victory 'ud be main sorry if she knew how things be going in these parts—ay, that would she. She's a kindly face o' her own, and a gentle 'art in her bress to feel for them as is sad and sorry, has Queen Victory, and I wish as some chap were goin' up Lunnun way, and could tell her how the miller's for grinding more beside his corn. He'd get a tellin' orf, I reckon, as 'ud last him a' his loife, and learn to sing sma', bein' so rebuked by them as sit in high places."

Dr. Turtle had not heard the latter part of this discourse.

He was wrapped in a sort of wordless ecstasy—a delirium of loyalty, taking minute pinches of snuff airily, as though tossing off imaginary toasts. Was it not known in Becklington, from one end to the other, how devoted to the reigning girl-queen was that man of elegance, Dr. Turtle?

Jake thought it was high time to bring the doctor out of his reverie. Were there not many things to hear and to learn?

"You've had a baddish time of it lately, yourself, sir. It stands to reason it conna be a pleasant thing in a man to be lugged out of his warm bed in the middle of the night, to look at a drowned man's eyes starin' at nothin'."

"Mere accidents of the profession, Jake," said the doctor, dusting the frill of his shirt as he spoke; "mere accidents of the profession. But still, it was a sad sight—a sad sight! Then I had to go and break the event to Mr. Geoffrey, and he, naturally, felt it a good deal, the sad event being, as it is, so intimately connected with the bank robbery. Indeed (this is in confidence), I fear a relapse. It seemed to take great hold of him. As to his wife—a woman so fragile, Jake, you might blow her away like a feather——"

"If I wur Maister Geoffrey," put in Jake, "I'd give a mort o' money to the man as could blow hard enough—that would I. Why, she must cost him a fortune in doctor's stuff, let alone being such a wangling feckless kind of a body to have about the house."

"Well, well," said Dr. Turtle, gracefully waiving the delicate question of drugs, "she was terribly shattered, and the quantity of camphor-julep—— But tut, tut! I am talking shop, and that's against rule. Now, there's Mrs. Devenant—there's a woman for you! Hang me if she isn't a puzzler."

Jake had once more let his work fall upon his knee, pushed his spectacles up among the spikes of tow which he called his hair, and was listening keenly.

"Not a tear, Jake, not a tear, I give you my word; helped in the necessary investigations as if she'd been born and bred in the wards of an hospital. When I laid down the hand I had been holding and looked across at her, there she was looking like—well, let us say, like Lot's wife after that little misadventure of hers in the plains. 'He is dead,' she said, 'stone dead. I knew it from the first,' and then she stood there by the—well, let us say, the mortal remains, and everyone passed her by with a sort of creeping fear written in their faces. Not one uttered a

word of sympathy. I had the will to do it, but the words stuck in my throat, Jake—stuck in my throat."

"No wonder," said Jake, drawing a long breath; "sorrow must have turned her fierce. There's critters as goes like that when you take their young from 'em; they want to rend and tear all as come anigh 'em; a hard sorer's a fearsome sight."

"Her eyes never seemed to be looking at us," continued the doctor, who had warmed to his theme, "but at something far away. The child had come creeping down the stairs in her little white night-dress, and someone was holding her back upon the lowermost stair; you could hear her moaning and crying out to be 'let go.' Ah, Jake! men in my profession need to have strong nerves. If a young fellow comes to me and says, 'Shall I enter the medical profession?' I answer his question by another: 'My very dear sir, the matter lies in a nut-shell. Have you strong nerves?'"

Then, with a cheery "Good-day to you!" away went the doctor to tell the story of Hester Devenant's steadfast, tearless, fierce, defiant grief to some one else.

The sheriff's enquiry took place soon after mid-day, and a verdict of "Suicide while in an unsound state of mind" was returned.

All this was interesting in no common degree, but paled before the reputed arrival of the Bow Street runner an hour or two later.

To-morrow promised to yield a plentiful harvest of intensely exciting events.

What chance had the tragedy enacting in the thatched cottage up among the dykes against such claims upon public interest?

The streets grew all at once full of stir and restless goings to and fro. Groups formed and loitered as they had done upon the day the robbery was discovered.

And secret evil-doers in the good town of Becklington went heavily, uneasily conscious that an unfamiliar and mighty power was in their midst, and that a sparkling bull's-eye of detection might be turned upon them at any moment, and a resistless arm drag forth their misdeeds into the light of day.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXIV. MR. JUNIPER.

THOUGH there was an air of badinage, almost of tomfoolery, about Dolly when she spoke of her matrimonial prospects to her father,—as when she said that she would “stick a knife” into Mr. Barry,—still there was a seriousness in all she said which was more than grave. She was pathetic and melancholy. She knew that there was nothing before her but to stay with her father, and then to devote herself to her cousins, from whom she was aware that she recoiled almost with hatred. And she knew that it would be a good thing to be married,—if only the right man would come. The right man would have to bear with her father, and live in the same house with him to the end. The right man must be a “preux chevalier sans peur et sans reproche.” The right man must be strong-minded and masterful, and must have a will of his own; but he must be strong-minded always for good. And where was she to find such a man as this, she who was only an attorney's daughter, plain too, and with many eccentricities? She was not intended to marry, and consequently the only man who came in her way was her father's partner—for whom, in regard to a share in the business, she might be desirable.

Devotion to the Carroll cousins was manifestly her duty. The two eldest girls she absolutely did hate,—and their father. To hate the father, because he was vicious beyond cure, might be very well; but she could not hate the girls without being aware that she was guilty of a grievous sin. Every taste possessed by them was antagonistic to her. Their amusements,

their literature, their clothes, their manners,—especially in regard to men,—their gestures and colour, were distasteful to her. “They hide their dirt with a thin veneer of cheap finery,” said Dolly to her father. He had replied by telling her that she was nasty. “No; but, unfortunately, I cannot but see nastiness.” Dolly herself was clean to fastidiousness. Take off her coarse frock, and there the well-dressed lady began. “Look at the heels of Sophie's boots. Give her a push, and she'd fall off her pins as though they were stilts. They're always asking to have a shoemaker's bill paid, and yet they won't wear stout boots.” “I'll pay the man,” she said to Amelia one day, “if you'll promise to wear what I'll buy you for the next six months.” But Amelia had only turned up her nose. These were the relatives to whom it would become her duty to devote her life!

The next morning she started off to call in Bolsover Terrace with an intention, not to begin her duty, but to make a struggle at the adequate performance of it. She took with her some article of clothing intended for one of the younger children, but which the child herself was to complete. But when she entered the parlour, she was astounded at finding that Mr. Carroll was there. It was nearly twelve o'clock, and at that time Mr. Carroll never was there. He was either in bed, or at Tattersall's, or—— Dolly did not care where. She had long since made up her mind that there must be a permanent quarrel between herself and her uncle, and her desire was generally respected. Now, unfortunately, he was present, and with him were his wife and two elder daughters. To be devoted, thought Dolly to herself, to such a family as this,—and without anybody else in the world to care for! She gave her aunt a kiss, and

touched the girls' hands, and made a very distant bow to Mr. Carroll. Then she began about the parcel in her hands, and having given her instructions, was preparing to depart.

But her aunt stopped her. "I think you ought to know, Dorothea."

"Certainly," said Mr. Carroll. "It is quite right that your cousin should know."

"If you think it proper, I'm sure I can't object," said Amelia.

"She won't approve, I'm sure," said Sophie.

"Her young man has come forward and spoken," said Mr. Carroll.

"And quite in a proper spirit," said Amelia.

"Of course," said Mrs. Carroll, "we are not to expect too much. Though we are respectable, in birth and all that, we are poor. Mr. Carroll has got nothing to give her."

"I've been the most unfortunate man in the world," said Mr. Carroll.

"We won't talk about that now," continued Mrs. Carroll. "Here we are without anything."

"You have decent blood," said Dolly; "at any rate, on one side;"—for she did not believe in the Carrolls.

"On both, on both," said Mr. Carroll, rising up, and putting his hand upon his heart. "I can boast of royal blood among my ancestors."

"But here we are without anything," said Mrs. Carroll again. "Mr. Juniper is a most respectable man."

"He has been attached to some of the leading racing establishments in the kingdom," said Mr. Carroll. Dolly had heard of Mr. Juniper as a trainer, though she did not accurately know what a trainer meant.

"He is almost as great a man as the owner, for the matter of that," said Amelia, standing up for her lover.

"He is not to say young;—perhaps forty," said Mrs. Carroll, "and he has a very decent house of his own at Newmarket." Dolly immediately began to think whether this might be for the better or for the worse. Newmarket was a long way off, and the girl would be taken away. And it might be a good thing to dispose of one of such a string of daughters, even to Mr. Juniper. Of course there would be the disagreeable nature of the connection. But, as Dolly had once said to her father, their share of the world's burdens had to be borne, and this was one of them. Her first cousin must marry the trainer

She, who had spoken so enthusiastically about gentlemen, must put up with it. She knew that Mr. Juniper was but a small man in his own line, but she would never disown him by word of mouth. He should be her cousin Juniper. But she did hope that she might not be called upon to see him frequently. After all, he might be much more respectable than Mr. Carroll.

"I am glad he has a house of his own," said Dolly.

"It's a much better house than Fulham Manor," said Amelia.

Dolly was angered, not at the comparison between the houses, but at the ingratitude and insolence of the girl. "Very well," said she, addressing herself to her aunt; "if her parents are contented, of course it is not for me or for papa to be discontented. The thing to think of is the honesty of the man and his industry;—not the excellence of the house."

"But you seemed to think that we were to live in a pigstye," said Amelia.

"Mr. Juniper stands very high on the turf," said Mr. Carroll. "Mr. Leadabit's horses have always run straight, and Mousetrap won the Two-year-old Trial Stakes last spring, giving two pounds to Box-and-Cox. A good-looking tall fellow. You remember seeing him here once last summer." This was addressed to Miss Grey; but Miss Grey had made up her mind never to exchange a word with Mr. Carroll.

"When is it to be, my dear?" said Miss Grey, turning to the ladies, but intending to address herself to Amelia. She had already made up her mind to forgive the girl for her insolence about the house. If the girl was to be taken away there was so much the more reason for forgiving her that and other things.

"Oh;—I thought you did not mean to speak to me at all," said Amelia. "I supposed the cut was to be extended from papa to me."

"Amelia; how can you be so silly!" said the mother.

"If you think that I am going to put up with that kind of thing, you're mistaken," said Amelia. "She had got not only a lover but a husband in prospect, and was much superior to her cousin,—who had neither one or the other, as far as she was aware. "Mr. Juniper with an excellent house and a plentiful income is quite good enough for me, though he hasn't got any regal ancestors." She did not intend to laugh at her

father, but was aware that something had been said about ancestors by her cousin. "A gentleman who has the management of horses is almost the same as owning them."

"But when is it to be?" again asked Dolly.

"That depends a little upon my brother," said Mrs. Carroll in a voice hardly above a whisper. "Mr. Juniper has spoken about a day."

"Then it will depend chiefly on himself and the young lady, I suppose."

"Well, Dorothea, there are money difficulties. There's no denying it."

"I wish I could shower gold into her lap," said Mr. Carroll,—"only for the accursed conventionalities of the world."

"Bother, papa," said Sophia.

"It will be the last of it as far as I am concerned," said Amelia.

"Mr. Juniper has said something about a few hundred pounds," said Mrs. Carroll.

"It isn't much that he wants."

Then Miss Grey spoke in a severe tone. "You must speak to my father about that."

"I am not to have your good word, I suppose," said Amelia. Human flesh and blood could not but remember all that had been done, and always with her consent. "Five hundred pounds is not a great deal for portioning off a girl when that is to be the last that she is ever to have." One of six nieces whose father and mother were maintained, and that without the slightest claim! It was so that Dorothy argued; but her arguments were kept to her own bosom. "But I must trust to my dear uncle. I see that I am not to have a word from you."

The matter was now becoming serious. Here was the eldest girl, one of six daughters, putting in her claim for five hundred pounds portion. This would amount to three thousand pounds for the lot, and, as the process of marrying them went on, they would all have to be maintained as at present. What with their school expenses and their clothes, the necessary funds for the Carroll family amounted to six hundred pounds a year. That was the regular allowance, and there were others whenever Mr. Carroll wanted a pair of trousers. And Dolly's acerbation was aroused by a belief on her part that the money asked for trousers took him generally to race-courses. And now five hundred pounds was boldly demanded so as to induce a groom to make one of the girls

his wife! She almost regretted that in former years she had promised to assist her father in befriending the Carroll relations. "Perhaps, Dorothea, you won't mind stepping into my bedroom with me, just for a moment." This was said by Mrs. Carroll, and Dolly most unwillingly followed her aunt upstairs.

"Of course I know all that you've got to say," began Mrs. Carroll.

"Then, aunt, why bring me in here?"

"Because I wish to explain things a little. Don't be ill-natured, Dorothea."

"I won't if I can help it."

"I know your nature, how good it is." Here Dorothy shook her head. "Only think of me and of my sufferings! I haven't come to this without suffering." Then the poor woman began to cry.

"I feel for you through it all; I do," said Dolly.

"That poor man! To have to be always with him, and always doing my best to keep him out of mischief."

"A man who will do nothing else must do harm."

"Of course he must. But what can he do now? And the children! I can see. Of course I know that they are not all that they ought to be. But with six of them, and nobody but myself, how can I do it all? And they are his children as well as mine." Dolly's heart was filled with pity as she heard this, which she knew to be so true! "In answering you they have uppish bad ways. They don't like to submit to one so near their own age."

"Not a word that has come from the mouth of one of them addressed to myself has ever done them any harm with my father. That is what you mean."

"No;—but with yourself."

"I do not take anger,—against them,—out of the room with me."

"Now about Mr. Juniper."

"The question is one much too big for me. Am I to tell my father?"

"I was thinking,—that if you would do so!"

"I cannot tell him that he ought to find five hundred pounds for Mr. Juniper."

"Perhaps four would do."

"Nor can I ask him to drive a bargain."

"How much would he give her,—to be married?"

"Why should he give her anything? He feeds her and gives her clothes. It is only fit that the truth should be explained to you. Girls so circumstanced, when

they are clothed and fed by their own fathers must be married without fortunes or must remain unmarried. As Sophie, and Georgina, and Minna, and Brenda come up, the same requests will be made."

"Poor Potsey!" said the mother. For Potsey was a plain girl.

"If this be done for Amelia, must it not be done for all of them? Papa is not a rich man, but he has been very generous. Is it fair to ask him for five hundred pounds to give to—Mr. Juniper?"

"A gentleman nowadays does not like not to get something."

"Then a gentleman must go where something is to be got. The truth has to be told, Aunt Carroll. My father is willing enough to do what he can for you and the girls, but I do not think that he will give five hundred pounds to Mr. Juniper."

"It is once for all. Four hundred pounds perhaps would do."

"I do not think that he can make a bargain,—nor that he will pay any sum to Mr. Juniper."

"To get one of them off would be so much! What is to become of them? To have one married would be the way for others. Oh, Dorothy, if you would only think of my condition! I know your papa will do what you tell him."

Dolly told that her father would be more likely to do it if she were not to interfere at all. But she could not say that. She did feel the request to be altogether unreasonable. She struggled to avert from her own mind all feeling of dislike for the girl, and to look at it as she might have done if Amelia had been her special friend.

"Aunt Carroll," she said, "you had better go up to London and see my father there,—in his chambers. You will catch him if you go at once."

"Alone?"

"Yes, alone. Tell him about the girl's marriage, and let him judge what he ought to do."

"Could not you come with me?"

"No. You don't understand. I have to think of his money. He can say what he will do with his own."

"He will never give it without coming to you."

"He never will if he does come to me. You may prevail with him. A man may throw away his own money as he pleases. I cannot tell him that he ought to do it. You may say that you have told me, and that I have sent you to him. And tell

him, let him do what he will, that I shall find no fault with him. If you can understand me and him you will know that I can do nothing for you beyond that." Then Dolly took her leave, and went home.

The mother, turning it all over in her mind, did understand something of her niece, and went off to London as quick as the omnibus could take her. There she did see her brother, and he came back in consequence to dinner a little earlier than usual. "Why did you send my sister to me?" were the first words which he said to Dolly.

"Because it was your business, and not mine."

"How dare you separate my business and yours? What do you think I have done?"

"Given the young lady five hundred pounds down on the nail."

"Worse than that."

"Worse!"

"Much worse. But why did you send my sister to my chambers?"

"But what have you done, papa? You don't mean that you have given the shark more than he demands?"

"I don't know that he's a shark. Why shouldn't the man want five hundred pounds with his wife? Mr. Barry would want much more with you, and would be entitled to ask for much more."

"You are my father."

"Yes;—but those poor girls have been taught to look upon me almost as their father."

"But what have you done?"

"I have promised them each three hundred and fifty pounds on their wedding-day,—three hundred pounds to go to their husbands, and fifty pounds for wedding expenses,—on condition that they marry with my approval. I shall not be so hard to please for them as for you."

"And you have approved of Mr. Juniper?"

"I have already set on foot enquiries down at Newmarket; and I have made an exception in favour of Mr. Juniper. He is to have four hundred and fifty pounds. Jane only asked four hundred pounds to begin with. You are not to find fault with me."

"No;—that is part of the bargain. I wonder whether my aunt knew what a thoroughly good-natured thing I did. We must have no more puddings now, and you must come down by the omnibus."

"It is not quite so bad as that, Dolly."

"When one has given away one's money extravagantly one ought to be made to feel the pinch one's self. But dear, dear, darling old man, why shouldn't you give away your money as you please? I don't want it. I am not in the least afraid but what there will be plenty for me. But when the girl talks about her five hundred pound so glibly, as though she had a right to expect it, and spoke of this jockey with such inward pride of heart——"

"A girl ought to be proud of her husband."

"Your niece ought not to be proud of marrying a groom. But she angered me, and so did my aunt,—though I pitied her. Then I reflected that they could get nothing from me in my anger,—not even a promise of a good word. So I sent her to you. It was, at any rate, the best thing I could do for them." Mr. Grey thought that it was.

KING RICHARD THE SECOND.

THE tragedy of Richard the Second, "as it hath been publicly acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain his servants," was first published in 1597, in quarto. There followed other quarto editions in 1598 and 1608; the title-page of the quarto of 1608 announcing that the tragedy was now published "with new additions of the Parliament scene and the deposing of King Richard, as it hath been lately acted by the King's Majesty's servants at the Globe." The new additions consisted of one hundred and sixty-five lines, and form the most important part of the first scene of the fourth act. It has been conjectured that these new additions had been well known to the stage some years before they were given to the printer.

Shakespeare found in Holinshed's Chronicle an account of King Richard's life and reign. No earlier tragedy, from which he could have derived assistance, is now known to exist. A play, mentioned by Camden, dealing with this subject, yet different from Shakespeare's tragedy, was performed at the Globe Theatre in 1601; and Sir John Haywarde published in 1599 his History of the First Year of Henry the Fourth, which included the deposition of Richard. Shakespeare's Richard, however, having first issued from the press in 1597, could not have profited by these works.

Richard the Second may have been a popular play because of its political signifi-

cance, or because, in troublous times, the story of a revolution and the deposition of a king had much to recommend it to the suffering and the discontented. Then the poet had, as it were, preached against royal favouritism. Richard's ruin might be traced to this vice of kings, specially odious to their people. Elizabeth had fitted the cap to her own head. "I am Richard the Second, know you not that?" she is reported to have said to William Lamburde. Indeed Her Majesty was much given to favouritism, and may well have felt herself rebuked by the play. It has been held that Shakespeare's Richard the Second was acted in the streets of London by special direction of the friends of the Earl of Essex in the afternoon before his rebellion broke out, by way of preparation of the public mind for what was to happen. The arrangement for the performance of the play was made with Augustine Phillips, "servant to the Lord Chamberlain and one of his players;" and Phillips was a member of the theatrical company to which Shakespeare belonged.

After the Restoration the character of the play, or its applicability to historical events of a later date, stood much in the way of its return to the stage. Nahum Tate, poet laureate from 1692 to 1715, having altered and mangled King Lear, next laid hands upon Richard the Second—not Richard the Third, as it is erroneously stated in Gerard Langbaine's Account of the English Dramatic Poets, 1691—and founded upon it a tragedy called The Sicilian Usurper, represented at the Theatre Royal in 1681. Apparently he had changed the title of the drama at the last moment, removed the scene to a distant land, and assigned foreign names to the characters, Alcidore, Cleon, etc., as in his dedication he complains that the play had been suppressed, "first in its own name and then in disguise," while on the third day it had been silenced altogether and forbidden further representation, although he had been at great pains to heighten the character of Richard and to palliate his miscarriages, to soften the reproaches of Gaunt and the invectives of the nobles, and to disguise the foul practices of the courtiers. "Every scene," he protested, "is full of respect to Majesty and the dignity of courts; not one altered page but what breathes loyalty." He had expected that his play would have received protection rather than prohibition, and held that it would have done so if the

authorities had listened to his petition to have his manuscript perused and dealt with according as the contents deserved. He continues: "But a positive doom of suppression, without examination, was all that I could procure. For the two days on which it was acted the change of the scene, names of persons, etc., was a great disadvantage. I called my persons Sicilians, but might as well have made them inhabitants of the world in the moon."

Tate's alterations of the text were not very material; the greater part of the play was still Shakespeare's. Tate wrote new scenes to increase the importance of the Queen's character, and contrived to make the Duke of York rather comic than tragic. Certain passages of low comedy were introduced in the second act, and generally the speeches were much curtailed throughout the play. A comic epilogue in the vilest taste was added to the tragedy. Tate's *Sicilian Usurper* was never reproduced.

Richard the Second next appeared, adapted by Theobald, at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1719. Some pains had evidently been taken with the production. The play-bills of the 9th December announced that there would be no performance on that day, the company being obliged "to lie still a day for practice of the tragedy" to be presented the following evening. Theobald introduces a new character, a daughter of the Earl of Northumberland, the Lady Percy, with whom the Duke of Aumerle is supposed to be in love. With the exception of some few speeches transferred to a later period of the play, the first and second acts of the original are wholly omitted, and the scene is laid throughout at or before the Tower. Richard's speech upon the coast of Wales after his landing from his expedition to Ireland, "Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand," etc., is made to apply, ridiculously enough, to his return from Wales to the Tower; but "absurdities," as Genest bluntly remarks, "are pitfalls into which the improvers of Shakespeare are pretty sure to tumble." In his preface Theobald admitted that he had made some innovations upon history and upon Shakespeare, "as in bringing Richard and Bolingbroke to meet first at the Tower, keeping York steady to the interest of the King, heightening Aumerle's character in making him die for the cause, and despatching Richard at the Tower, who indeed was murdered at Pontefract Castle."

He pretended, however, to "a discretionary power of variation, either for the maintaining unity of action or supporting the dignity of the characters; and if," he concludes, "the little critics will be angry at this, I have patience to weather their ill-nature: I shall stand excused among the better judges." But he spoke too confidently. His alteration obtained performance upon seven nights, and then found its final resting-place upon the shelf by the side of Tate's *Sicilian Usurper*.

From Tate, Theobald had not borrowed. More than half of the play was Shakespeare's. But Theobald's additions are very insipid and feeble. He has laboured to convert the work into a merely conventional tragedy. The character of the Queen is much amplified. Lady Percy is a ranting heroine, who, drawing a secret dagger from her side, stabs herself when she learns of the execution of Aumerle. Northumberland regards his daughter's death as the punishment of his own malefactions. "My daughter!" he exclaims; "fate pursues my guilt too fast!" and he rushes off. The Duke of York slays himself upon discovering the dead body of his nephew the King. Bolingbroke concludes the play with a moral sentiment which does not fall very appropriately from his lips:

Though vengeance may a while withhold her hand,
A king's blood, unatoned, must curse the land.

Richard was played by Ryan, York by Boheme, Aumerle by Smith, and Bolingbroke by Leigh; Mrs. Bullock and Mrs. Spiller appearing as the Queen and Lady Piercy. Theobald in rather fulsome terms dedicated his adaptation to Lord Orrery, and was rewarded by that nobleman with a purse of one hundred guineas.

At Covent Garden, in 1738, Richard the Second, according to the original text, was revived at the special desire of certain ladies of quality who had taken Shakespeare under their particular patronage, and had stimulated the managers to reproduce, with new scenery and decorations, certain of his most esteemed plays. The ladies were ridiculed by Fielding, but they may claim to have done the stage good service. They succeeded in bringing Shakespeare into fashion for some while, at any rate. Richard the Second obtained seven representations, and remained upon the acting list of plays for the next two seasons. Delane appeared as the King, and Ryan now played Bolingbroke; Norfolk was

personated by Tom Walker, York by Stephens, Gaunt by Johnson, Northumberland by Bridgewater, and Aumerle by Hallam; the Queen, the Duchess of York, and the Duchess of Gloucester finding representation at the hands of Mrs. Horton, Mrs. Hallam, and Mrs. James respectively. Great pains were taken to picture the lists at Coventry, and the arrangements for the single combat of Norfolk and Bolingbroke, "with all the decorations proper to the appellant and respondent, the judges and the spectators." The King was seated on a throne of state. The combatants appeared clothed in complete steel. On opposite sides of the lists two chairs, finely adorned, were placed; to these they retired after they had in turn stood forth and spoken. Davies relates that when Walker, as Norfolk, attempted to speak, his helmet was found to be so tightly laced under his chin that he could not make himself audible, and the audience were provoked to laughter. However, the helmet was soon loosened, and the actor was heard with attention. The same authority records that the scene between Richard and Gaunt was "acted with such propriety as gained the approbation of the audience." Johnson, the representative of Gaunt, was commonly called "tall Johnson," for he was nearly seven feet high. Aaron Hill, his father-in-law, was said to have instructed him in the part. The actor's "good understanding and decent deportment rendered him not disagreeable to the audience;" but it was judged that "his conception was not equal to the animated dialogue of the character, or his feeling powerful enough for the situation of it." Stephens, who appeared as York, was known to have been a button-maker in Paternoster Row, who had been tempted by his skill in imitating the tones and manner of Barton Booth to adopt the profession of the stage. Stephens had appeared as Othello at Drury Lane in 1734 with signal success, the audience rewarding him with loud cries of "Bravo! Better than Quin! better than Quin!" These loud praises of the button-maker were so offensive to Quin, that, to avoid them, he absented himself from the coffee-houses he had usually frequented. Stephens met with an inferior welcome when he essayed other characters; he was of mature age, clumsy of form, and awkward of manner, and his appearance as the gay young libertine Polydore, in Otway's tragedy of The Orphan, wearing a full-bottomed wig and

red stockings, "though they had long been laid aside by the politer part of the town," seems to have excited some ridicule. Gradually he fell in public esteem, and left London to become an itinerant actor. He died at Bath about 1760, "respected for his general good behaviour," but little regretted as a theatrical performer. When he made his Sylvester Daggerwood confess himself the son of a button-maker, and protest that he had "a soul above buttons," George Colman may have had in mind the story of the unfortunate stage-struck Mr. Stephens of Paternoster Row.

The manager, embarrassed by the number of the dramatis personæ, was compelled to assign certain of the parts to very unfit or incompetent performers. Michael Stoppelaer, famed as a great blunderer, and for his singing comic Irish and Scotch songs, was required to appear as the Abbot of Westminster, and in that dignified character, assisted by an accidental hoarseness, succeeded in exciting roars of laughter. He was something of a scholar, however, and had been educated at Trinity College, Dublin. An actor known as Tom Chapman, accepted as an admirable actor of Shakespeare's clowns, would-be wits, fops, and fanatics, was assigned the part of the Bishop of Carlisle, and seems to have conducted himself very unsatisfactorily. "In truth," says Davies, "there was nothing more dissonant and unharmonious than his speaking, or rather bellowing, the bishop's harangue." He was "endured in his discords," however, on account of his many excellences in comedy. But he was troubled with a sort of passion for appearing in tragic parts. He owned the Richmond Theatre, and was wont to allot himself occupation upon his stage so unsuited to his abilities as to result in the ruin of his property as well as of all decorum. The actor, who in the scene of the King's deposition was required to represent an attendant and to bring on a looking-glass, became in after years famous as the most popular comedian of his time—Richard Yates. The groom, who enters in the fifth act, was personated by an eccentric actor named Nat Clarke. He was the original Filch in The Beggar's Opera, and from his close resemblance to Rich in size and form was constantly required to appear as the double or deputy of that famous harlequin in the more arduous or the least interesting scenes of pantomime.

There still attached to the tragedy a certain political significance in connection with more recent events. For twenty-five years peace had prevailed; but serious provocation had been given by the Court of Madrid, the Spanish coast-ships had committed depredations upon English merchant-vessels, and the nation was now clamorous for war. Walpole, however, was much disinclined to involve England in a contest of which the end could not be foreseen. He feared that war would unite against him both branches of the house of Bourbon, and that the Jacobites would avail themselves of the opportunity to bring about another rising in Scotland. The minister was most unpopular. Many sentences in the tragedy were applied to the existing situation of affairs. The conversation of Northumberland and his friends in the second act provided many apposite passages. When in his most solemn manner Bridgewater as Northumberland pronounced the words:

The king is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers—

there was great uproar, hands were clapped, and sticks were clattered as noisily as possible. Lord Ross's remark,

The Earl of Wiltshire hath the state in farm,
was immediately applied to Walpole, "with the loudest shouts and huzzas I ever heard," writes Davies, who was present. Northumberland's argument that the king's revenue was not diminished by war was also received with extraordinary applause:

Wars have not wasted it, for warred he hath not,
But basely yielded upon compromise
That which his ancestors achieved with blows:
More hath he spent in peace, than they in wars.

Nor was it only in the theatre that quotations from Richard the Second were employed as a means of attacking the ministry. In the Court of Queen's Bench, Haynes, the printer of *The Craftsman*, was prosecuted because of the appearance in that journal of a letter containing strong application of severe passages in the tragedy to the Government, and particularly to Sir Robert Walpole.

There was a revival of the tragedy at York in 1804, when it was pointed out in the play-bill as a special and local attraction, that the closing incidents of Richard the Second occur in Pomfret Castle.

At Newcastle, in 1812, Macready produced the tragedy "with due omissions," but with "all the scenic effects that the

limits of the theatre would permit of." Macready was wont to pride himself that he had been the first to play Richard "since the time of Shakespeare," but he had overlooked the textual revival of 1738. The performance was completely successful, and the play proved the attraction of the season. Still, Richard the Second did not establish itself upon the stage. Macready dwells upon the passion of its language and the beauty of its poetry, but points out the "absence of any marked idiosyncrasy in the persons of the drama." They talk well, but, as he adds, "they do little else than talk; nor can all the charm of composition redeem, in a dramatic point of view, the weakness resulting from this accident in a play's construction." The part of Richard seems, however, to have enjoyed the favour of Macready. He produced the play at Glasgow in 1813; it was most carefully presented, but it "succeeded only in obtaining the applause of scanty audiences." He played Richard also for his benefit at Dublin in 1815, when it was "as usual applauded, but it did not attract," and at Bath in the same year. Genest, who, no doubt, attended the representation, writes of the play that it was "gotten up at some expense, and was well acted; it was, however, performed but twice, and that to bad houses." He further notes that the alterations made in the text "were little or nothing more than omissions, except that the lines about Bolingbroke's affectation of popularity were improperly taken from the King and given to Aumerle." Richard the Second also was included in the round of characters assumed by the tragedian at the Haymarket Theatre during his last season upon the stage. On the 19th November, 1850, he enters in his diary: "Read in the green-room the play of King Richard the Second. I did not attempt more than to convey to the other actors the idea of their characters." This fact of reading the play in the green-room is significant. Richard the Second had been so long unacted that it was viewed and treated as a work altogether new to the stage. Macready's performance was much applauded by the critics. The actor possessed singular command of pathetic expression; he was said in this part to have exceeded himself "in the power of actualising hopeless wretchedness."

We must turn back, however, to the year 1815, when the example set by Macready in Newcastle was followed in London, and Richard the Second was revived for

Edmund Kean at Drury Lane, but "with considerable alterations and additions from the writings of Shakespeare." The committee of noblemen and gentlemen who governed Drury Lane had, absurdly enough, entrusted the manipulation of the tragedy to Mr. Wroughton, actor and stage-manager. Hazlitt, strange to say, applauds the alteration as the best that had been attempted, "for it consists entirely of omissions, except one or two scenes which are idly tacked on to the conclusion." But Wroughton's alterations are, in truth, clumsy, tasteless, and worthless enough. With curious obtuseness, he wholly omits the scene of the lists in the first act. Instead of commanding the combat between Bolingbroke and Norfolk, the King at once sentences them to banishment. The Queen is made to conclude the second act with a soliloquy borrowed from the third act of the second part of King Henry the Sixth. In the following act, Bolingbroke speaks apart some sixteen lines culled from the speech of the Duke of York in the same act of Henry the Sixth, Part Two. In the garden scene of the fourth act, the Queen is discovered seated on a sofa, and one of her ladies—Blanche, represented by Miss Foote—sings a song to entertain her. To the Queen's last speech five lines from Titus Andronicus are added. In the fourth act the speeches are much garbled and the scenes curtailed, and Bolingbroke brings it to a close with a soliloquy taken from the third part of Henry the Sixth. The Duchess of York and the discovery of Aumerle's conspiracy are omitted from the fifth act. In the scene of the parting of the King and Queen, lines are introduced borrowed from the parting of Suffolk and Queen Margaret in Henry the Sixth, Part Two. Presently Bolingbroke introduces a soliloquy from Titus Andronicus, and a conversation ensues made up of scraps from Antony and Cleopatra, Troilus and Cressida, Titus Andronicus, etc. Bolingbroke has another soliloquy, the composition apparently of Mr. Wroughton. Richard is murdered in the Tower instead of in Pomfret Castle. After the King's death, the Queen reappears, speaks some few lines from King Lear, and falls lifeless upon the body. Bolingbroke concludes the play as in the original. Wroughton's alteration of Richard the Second is very much in the manner of Cibber's adaptation of Richard the Third.

This alteration of Shakespeare enioved

some thirteen representations at Drury Lane, but the Richard of Kean did not obtain much approval. "He threw out bright sparks and flashes of genius," writes Mr. Procter in his Life of the actor, "as in the scene with Bolingbroke and Northumberland, when the catalogue of his 'grievous crimes' is presented to him; but they did not irradiate the whole character." It was complained that Kean's Richard the Second was almost as fiery and energetic as his Richard the Third. Hazlitt noted that the character was "hardly given correctly as to the general outline." The actor made it "a character of passion—that is, of feeling combined with energy—whereas it is a character of pathos—that is to say, of feeling combined with weakness." It was pointed out, as the general fault of Kean's acting, that it was always energetic or nothing; that he was always on full stretch, never relaxed; that he expressed all the violence, the extravagance and fierceness of the passions, but not their misgivings, their helplessness, and sinkings into despair. "He has too much," the critic continues, "of that strong nerve and fibre that is always equally elastic. We might instance to the present purpose his dashing the glass down with all his might, in the scene with Hereford, instead of letting it fall out of his hands as from an infant's; also his manner of expostulating with Bolingbroke—'Why on thy knee thus low,' etc.—which was altogether fierce and heroic, instead of being sad, thoughtful, and melancholy. If Mr. Kean would look into some passages in this play—into that, in particular, 'Oh, that I were a mockery king of snow, to melt away before the sun of Bolingbroke'—he would find a clue to this character, and to human nature in general, which he seems to have missed," etc. Macready, in his Reminiscences, observes that "in none of his personations did the late Edmund Kean display more masterly elocution than in the third act of Richard the Second."

Kean's associates in the performance did not greatly distinguish themselves, apparently, or were completely eclipsed by the efforts of the leading actor of the night. Hazlitt writes: "Mr. Pope was respectable in John of Gaunt; Mr. Holland was lamentable in the Duke of York, and Mr. Elliston indifferent in Bolingbroke." Aumerle was played by James Wallack, and the Queen by Mrs. Bartley.

Richard the Second was presented at Sadler's Wells during Mr. Phelps's admir-

able management of that theatre, and was revived with special regard for its scenic appointments and decorations by Mr. Charles Kean at the Princess's in 1857. In the preface to his published arrangement of the tragedy, Mr. Charles Kean professed his desire to produce "a true portraiture of mediæval history." For the costumes, the works of Strutt, Meyrick, Fairholt, and Shaw had been consulted, and evidence had been gathered from the illuminated pages of the French metrical history of the deposition of King Richard, and from other books and manuscripts in the British Museum. The scenes of the Privy Council Chamber at Westminster, the Lists at Coventry, the Fleet at Milford Haven, the Castles of Pembroke and Flint, the garden at Langley, the Great Hall at Westminster, Traitor's Gate, and the dungeon at Pontefract, were all presented "in conformity with contemporaneous authority." John of Gaunt was seen to expire in his chamber at Ely House, Holborn, "the bed, the paintings on the walls, the furniture, and all the appointments of the room being scrupulously copied from authorities beyond dispute." Great pains were taken to exhibit the lists at Gosford Green, "with a passage of arms according to the usages of ancient chivalry." The combatants, clothed in complete steel, appeared on horseback with their lances in rest; the trumpets sounded the charge; and they were rushing furiously upon each other, when the King threw down his warder, suspended the duel, and decreed the exile of both challenger and challenged. In the second act Bolingbroke, wearing a black cap and surcoat by way of mourning for his father, John of Gaunt, led his army in the full panoply of war through the forest glades of a Gloucestershire landscape. But the spectacle attained its climax in an interpolated scene, or historical episode as it was called, dividing the third and fourth acts, and representing the triumphal entry of Bolingbroke into London. The Duke of York's speech in the fifth act to his duchess, was thus illustrated and embodied upon the stage. The scene represented a street in mediæval London, with the house-fronts tapestried and garlanded as on occasions of great public rejoicing. A vast crowd waited the coming of Bolingbroke with the deposed and captive Richard. A score of itinerant jesters danced to a tune said to be as old as the reign of Edward the Second. The crowd was provided with various incidental

amusements selected from Strutt's Sports and Pastimes of the English People. The bells rang out, the trumpets blared. Then entered a grand procession of the Lord Mayor, the aldermen and sheriffs, the City companies with their banners, minstrels, archers, troopers, knights, and nobles. Bolingbroke, dressed according to Froissart, in a short jacket of cloth of gold, with a blue garter on his left leg, and mounted on a white courser, was received with great shouts of welcome from the crowd, with ringing of joy-bells, flourishes of trumpets and other instruments. An ominous silence followed the entrance of the deposed king, upon his little horse. The authority of the chronicle of the Betrayal of King Richard the Second was regarded; an open space was kept round him so that all might see him, and a boy came forward to point at him and say: "Behold King Richard, who has done so much good to the people of England!" The boy was personated by Miss Kate Terry. Then came murmurs and groans from the crowd, and cries, "To the Tower with him! To the Tower with him!" while an old soldier, supposed to have fought under the banner of Edward the Black Prince at Cressy and Poitiers, endeavouring to pay homage to the son of his former commander, was prevented by the mob and treated with contempt. On behalf of this interpolated picture, and generally of his stage embellishment of Shakespeare, Mr. Kean pleaded that he had but endeavoured "to render dramatic representation conducive to the diffusion of knowledge—to surround the glowing imagery of the Great Poet with accompaniments true to the time of which he writes—realising the scenes and actions which he describes; exhibiting men as they once lived," etc. The public applauded, although a suspicion prevailed that Shakespeare had been employed rather as an excuse for spectacle. The manager could boast, however, that a play which formerly commanded only occasional repetition had now been enabled by no derogatory means to attract audiences for successive months. Richard the Second at the Princess's enjoyed a run of eighty-five nights, and was repeated twenty-seven times during the following season. Mr. Charles Kean appeared as the King, and Mrs. Kean as the Queen. Mr. Cooper, who had played the Duke of York with Macready at the Haymarket in 1850, resumed that character at the Princess's. Mr. Walter Lacy and Mr. Ryder repre-

sented John of Gaunt and Bolingbroke respectively.

There have been no later performances of Richard the Second.

EGLANTINE.

How sweetly, after gentle rain,
Comes floating down the grassy lane
The scent of eglantine.
See, wife, the old familiar seat
Bids welcome to a cool retreat,
This summer morning fine.

Sit down, dear heart, there needs no haste
For us to make, we well can waste
The longest of our days.
Our working-time is gone and past,
And we have leisure at the last,
For Nature and her ways.

So sit thee, darling, by my side,
Fond friend and firm, true wife and tried,
Best help in darkest hours.
Across the meads the linnet calls,
The breeze shakes down at intervals
The eglantine's pink flowers.

The eglantine! the eglantine!
Ah, tender, brown-eyed wife of mine,
I see a shadow creep
Across the calmness of thy brow,
The blossom dropping from the bough,
Wakes sorrow from its sleep.

Nay, dearest, dry the starting tear,
Is she not still our daughter dear?
Our pretty Eglantine?
Is she not yet as much our child,
As when upon her birth we smiled,
Thy little one and mine?

What though she chose, as daughters do,
To merge the old life in the new,
And gave to newer love
The right to take her by the hand,
And lead her from her fatherland,
God keepeth watch above.

What though the sea rolls wide between
That strange wild home where she is queen,
And this calm nook of ours;
What though her southern dwelling-place
Is brightened by no English face,
Nor homely English flowers.

What though our poor hearts surely know
That to her home we cannot go,
However sore we yearn;
Nor, since our darling hath her share
Of mother's bliss, and mother's care,
Can she to us return.

Yet, wife, we shall retrieve our loss;
There is an ocean all must cross;
Thy turn will come, and mine!
And we shall welcome to the bowers
Of Paradise, life's flower of flowers,
Our little Eglantine!

WAITING.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

CHAPTER III.

GEORGE WYATT rode home that day with the knowledge that the blow which he dreaded had fallen upon him, and that it now behoved him to bear it so that the woman whom he loved should never know what he suffered. It was nobody's

fault, it was only natural that Dora should incline towards the younger and more brilliant man.

And yet he had hoped, had believed it might have been otherwise; and he knew—now that it had become an impossibility—how he had nourished and fostered the hope till it had grown to be a part of his life. With his pipe between his teeth, and his hands behind his back, he paced the terrace-walk and garden that he had liked to think would, some day, be graced with her presence. And, as he recalled her words about “the utter stranger, who would go away in a day or two, and never be seen again,” his fate seemed to him very hard, almost harder than he could bear. The “utter stranger” had come and carried off the prize, and he must stand by and look on; nay, more than this, he must help him to gain it.

This was soon to be proved; he had promised to walk over to The Chestnuts that night with a book for Dora, and as he approached the gate, he found her sitting with her hands clasped together, on the seat under the window.

“Dora!” he exclaimed in alarmed tones, “what is the matter?”

“Oh, Mr. Wyatt, I have been watching for you, and hoping that you would come. Do go in and make Stephen listen to reason. He is so angry.”

She put her hand on his arm, and looked up in his face.

“Who is there? And where is Fanny?”

“Fanny did not come down to dinner, she was tired. There is only Stephen—and—and Walter. Do go!”

“Then don't sit here any longer; you will catch cold. Go into the drawing-room, and I will see what I can do.”

The news of Dora's engagement had burst upon Stephen Northlington like a thunder-bolt. He was not quick to perceive what was going on in his own household, and when Walter Dalton had asked for his sanction—as a matter of form—he had gazed upon him at first with mute astonishment. This state of mind did not, unfortunately, last long; he was a quick-tempered man, and his exclamation, “You propose to marry my sister!” was not exactly a happy phrase with which to commence a discussion on so important a subject.

By the time that George Wyatt appeared, Stephen had worked himself up to a pitch of red-hot indignation. “A man without a profession, and with no prospects,” he

said in his rage, when he had, after much questioning, elicited the information that Dalton had no private means; that he had quarrelled with his wealthy relations; that he had never sold a picture, except to the one uncle with whom he was still on speaking terms; and that his entire income was an uncertain salary from an art-club of which he was secretary.

So far Walter Dalton had had the best of the encounter, inasmuch as he had kept his temper admirably, and had represented that he and Dora were both young; that art was a great vocation; and that there was no reason why he should not achieve success as others had done before him.

"In the meantime you will live on love and moonshine, I presume," grumbled Stephen. "My sister has no property except a paltry hundred a year."

To do him justice, Walter had not speculated on the chance of Dora's fortune. He had been thrown in the way of a charming girl, and he had fallen in love with her. Now he declared himself to be utterly indifferent about her money; it did not matter to him if she had not sixpence in the world; he supposed that he could work for them both. Altogether he talked so well, that Stephen (ashamed of his outbreak of temper) began to soften down. Then came George Wyatt as a mediator, and finally a compromise was effected. Walter Dalton should go away immediately; he should refer Stephen to his relations in the North, and to certain well-known professional men in London; he should not correspond with Dora for a year; and if, at the end of that time, they should neither of them have changed their minds, why, then, perhaps Stephen Northlington would reconsider the question.

"You will be able to see your way clearly by that time," said George Wyatt. In spite of Dora's beseeching words, he was unable to repress a feeling of dislike to the handsome artist, but this very feeling caused him to judge him more leniently than he would otherwise have done. "I am unfair to the man," he thought; "Heaven knows he may not deserve it; and she loves him." So he suppressed his growing desire to encourage Stephen's opposition, and threw the weight of his opinion into the other scale. "You will be able to see your way clearly in a year's time," he said, "and you must remember that Miss Northlington is very young. Come back again next summer; Trevden

Hill will always be open to you, even if Mr. Northlington does not consider it advisable to ask you here, and with such an inducement to work before you, you will surely succeed."

Walter took the offered hand, and expressed his thanks in the open off-hand manner that was so irresistibly winning. Then Stephen, too, relented so fast, that before another quarter of an hour he proposed that they should all three go outside and smoke a cigar. He hoped that Mr. Dalton would excuse him if, in the heat of the moment, he had in any way wounded his feelings, and (in truth, his spirit of hospitality could not brook the thought of turning his guest out of the house) when he had said he wished him to leave The Chestnuts at once, he had not exactly meant it, and in fact, would Mr. Dalton remain another few days, but see as little of Dora as possible?

Walter was not slow to grasp the hand of friendship thus offered him, and, catching sight of Dora in the drawing-room, he seized the propitious moment, and asked if he might be allowed a few minutes' conversation with Miss Northlington. It was too late to draw back for the second time. Stephen consented (though not with the best grace in the world), and the lovers spent the rest of the evening together. Though the guardian had not formally given his permission, Walter Dalton had gained his point, and the engagement was virtually acknowledged.

"I knew it would come right if Mr. Wyatt took our part," said Dora when the welcome news was brought to her; "Stephen always listens to him."

"Yes," answered Walter, with the slightest possible shade in his dark eyes, "he behaved very well; but whether he had been there or not, you know, my own, that I must have triumphed in the long run. From the first moment I saw you, down by the hayfield, I knew we were meant for each other; if you were to change your mind, if circumstances parted us, I should never look up again. My own, my beautiful Dora!"

He put his hand on hers, his whole face was lighted up with enthusiasm, for the moment he had forgotten himself, and was thinking only of his love.

"Dearest," said Dora, "it will all come right. I will be very patient, and you are so strong and brave."

She believed in him thoroughly with her whole heart. He was her true knight

whom she was sending out into the world to win laurels innumerable; not that she wanted them for her own glorification, but that she might in all devotion lay them at the feet of her hero. So they talked and whispered together till the stars came out and the glow-worms began to twinkle under the shrubs.

In the meantime George Wyatt lent an attentive ear to his friend's rather lengthy account of this eventful day. Stephen had a great deal to say on the subject, but no very practical suggestion to make. It was odd that Fanny had not noticed what was going on (Fanny was so quick), but then she had been such a sufferer, owing no doubt to the heat, and had not had much opportunity of observing Mr. Dalton and Dora together. Fanny was inclined to like the young man. Stephen didn't altogether dislike him himself; he seemed willing enough to listen to advice; but the whole affair was confoundedly unreasonable from beginning to end. Dora was only eighteen; what did she want to get engaged for, and to a penniless adventurer? Though, to be sure, the fellow had the manners of a gentleman, and was connected with some very respectable people. So Stephen rambled on, alternating between the rôle of a stern guardian and that of an affectionate brother; but to make him decide on any definite course of action was extremely difficult; and when George Wyatt suggested that he had better go up to London and make the necessary enquiries, he fell back upon his old line of argument—the whole thing was so confoundedly awkward. What was he to do? "She really is such a pretty girl to throw herself away like this! You think so, don't you, Wyatt? Isn't she charming to-night? I declare they are at their music again; just listen."

The candles were lighted in the drawing-room, the windows thrown wide open. Walter Dalton was seated at the piano playing, that is to say, touching a chord now and then with his left hand, and Dora was standing by his side, singing. The tips of her fingers rested on his shoulder, her head was thrown back; the light of the candles fell on her fair face, surrounded with its halo of brown hair; behind her was a heavy screen with golden panels. Her eyes were shining with joy and she was singing, singing a song that George Wyatt had brought her a few weeks ago. The words of the song were trashy enough, but to-night they had a new meaning; her

whole soul was in them, as with her fresh young voice she sang:

"I walked with my love in the wood to-day,
The thrush sang loud to his fair;
The whole wide world looked golden gay
And I was the happiest there.
Ah me! I was the happiest there!"

George Wyatt turned away. "The happiest there" she should be, if he could make her so, and he fancied that the way to help her would be to place in her hands the thing that she longed for. If, in after years, he repented that he had done this, if he saw that he should have hesitated when he acted so decidedly, he was too simple-minded and honest to misconstrue his own deed, or to torment himself with reproaches. He put himself and his own feelings aside. The little girl whom he had loved from her childhood came and asked him to help her. Could he refuse her then? That was impossible to him.

On the whole, the investigations concerning Walter Dalton's previous career were not unsatisfactory. Everybody spoke well of him as a young man of unquestionable talent, though it did not appear that he had ever turned his talents to much account so far. Indeed, one old uncle (the iron-founder) with whom Stephen had an interview, suggested that Walter had no enemy except himself; for his part, he had done his duty by the boy in offering to take him into his business; he declined to make any further proposals, and, if his nephew contemplated marrying a young lady with no fortune to speak of (he begged Mr. Northlington's pardon, "but between you and me, what is a paltry hundred a year?") he wished to make it clear from the very beginning that he was not in a position to offer assistance to a young man who would not help himself. Though this statement was very much in keeping with his own opinion, it was not likely that Stephen Northlington would relish the iron-founder's plainness of speech. He came away from the interview furious with the uncle and leniently inclined towards the nephew, who had refused wealth rather than be beholden to that "impertinent old tradesman."

And yet it would seem that the iron-founder was not altogether wrong, for when, at the end of the prescribed year, Walter came to claim his bride, he did not seem to be any nearer to the desired goal—the being able to support a wife.

Dora did not trouble her head much about that, though she was all sympathy when he complained that the British public did not appreciate him. And, as

for Fanny, she openly rejoiced that there was no prospect of Dora's leaving The Chestnuts at present.

"You know, Stephen," she said to her husband, "I do not think that a London life would suit Dora's health; and what should I do without her? Dear good girl! We ought to be thankful that she is still with us. If Walter Dalton had been a rich man he would have carried her off at once, and what should I have done?"

"It doesn't look well," growled Stephen. "He's idle, and will never do any good. It doesn't look well."

But he had a firm belief in his wife's good sense. Besides which, the young people were backed up and encouraged by George Wyatt, so he refrained from taking Dalton to task, and allowed things to take their own course.

After a long holiday spent at The Chestnuts, during which period Walter Dalton had succeeded in thoroughly enjoying himself, and in putting all gloomy subjects into the far distance, he returned to London with renewed strength and energy, as he said.

The months passed on; Christmas had come and gone.

Dora was sitting in the drawing-room window, pen in hand. The year and a half that had elapsed, since she had first met the man who was to have such an influence on her life, had but developed her girlish beauty into new loveliness; there was more colour in her cheeks, her gray eyes looked larger and brighter.

"Why are you so quiet, Dora?" asked Fanny in a querulous tone of voice. The children had been sent to the nursery as being too noisy, and their mother was already wearying of the silence. "You have not spoken a word since breakfast."

"I'm so sorry; but, Fan, I am getting very anxious about Walter. He has only written once since Christmas, and then he had a bad cold. Do you know," said Dora, putting down her pen and clasping her hands behind her head, "I should so like to go up to London, and see if there's anything wrong."

"My dearest Dora!" exclaimed Fanny, lifting her eyebrows almost to the roots of her hair, "what extraordinary things you do say!"

"Do you believe in presentiments, Fanny? Stephen would say it was rubbish. But I am getting very unhappy, and I always feel that Walter wants someone to look after him when he is in London.

Suppose he is too ill to write to me? Suppose——"

The door opened softly. Fanny, who was completely taken up with her astonishment at what her sister-in-law was saying, did not hear it; but Dora turned her head leisurely. In a second she dropped her hands and ran to the door, the colour mounting to her face.

"Walter!" she cried. "My dear Walter, how good of you to come."

"I walked over from the station. I wanted to see you, Dora. I—I have something to say to you; it is rather important. How do you do, Mrs. Northlington?"

"I am charmed to see you," said Fanny. "You must excuse my running away, as I told nurse I would come and see if baby's boots fitted him; he does kick them out so. We shall meet at luncheon."

"Are you better? Was it wise to walk through the snow? Do come close to the fire," entreated Dora. She saw that he looked pale and disturbed, but she would not distress him with asking questions; he would tell her by-and-by. "My dearest," taking his hand between hers, "how very cold you are after your walk. Let me ring and order some wine."

All through these last weeks he had been making up his mind that she must know, and he had not dared to tell her. He had written, and torn up, letter after letter. It would be easier to tell her than to write, he had thought; and now that he was here, and she was looking at him with her lovely anxious eyes, it became more impossible than ever. Ah! why had he come at all! How pretty she was! A thousand times prettier, kneeling at his side in the red fire-light, than he had ever seen her before.

"Dora," he exclaimed, with an impulse of desperation, "I am going away!"

"Going away!" The colour died from her lips as she looked at him. "For how long?"

"I don't know, it is not decided. I've come to talk to you about it. Dora, I am the most miserable wretch on the face of the earth. Nothing prospers with me. Now there seems to be a chance, a remote chance (by sacrificing myself and my profession) that I may get on a little better, if I start afresh. A man in South America wants me to join him. He's got a share in a mine—you wouldn't understand exactly what he is—and I have come to ask you if I shall go." This was jerked out hurriedly, he dared not tell her that the agreement

was signed and his passage taken. "Help me to decide, my own Dora."

She came a little closer. For a few moments there was a dead silence.

"Would it be a good thing for you, Walter?" she asked at last.

"I hope so. I suppose it will be, and then if I get on—I must get on," he added between his teeth, "you will come to me, won't you? Your brother will let you, or I will come home and fetch my wife."

Again a silence.

"Walter!" her voice sounded hollow and strange; "I don't want to be in your way. Would it be better for you—I mean, would it be a help to you to start free? It is so difficult for me to say, my darling," and now she looked at him again with the old loving expression that had haunted him for weeks; "if it is for your good, Walter, we will be friends—always friends, but nothing more. Then, perhaps, you need not give up your profession and go away."

More than once he had been tempted to write and offer her her freedom. More than once he had cursed his own folly in getting engaged to a girl, whom there was no chance of his being able to marry for years, and whose relations were hostile to him; but at this moment he felt that he would rather break off his new engagements, quarrel with his employers, anything rather than part with her.

"Dora," he said in reproachful tones, "is this how you keep your promise? Do you want to throw me over?"

Then, and not till then, she threw her arms round his neck, sobbing:

"Oh, Walter! forgive me. I will do just as you wish, my dear, my own love."

Once again Walter came back to The Chestnuts to say "good-bye." It was the day before he sailed. He was in rather better spirits; the Peruvian scheme had, in fact, a great fascination for him, and that morning a dealer had come to his rooms and bought two of his pictures for a gentleman—doubtless a person of discrimination—whose name had not been given.

"It may be," said Walter, "that, after all, some day my work will be appreciated, but I can't afford to wait any longer. This man coming and insisting upon seeing the little landscape!—do you remember, Dora, the one I did in the garden last summer?"

Dora remembered it perfectly well, but she had no more suspicion than Walter

himself that the purchaser was George Wyatt, and that the pictures were at that moment on their way to Trevden Hill.

"It looks," continued Walter, "as if gradually my name were beginning to be talked about. In that case I should throw up my new appointment and come home at once. After all, London is the only place where a man of taste" (he meant a man of genius) "can really live. I shall simply exist in Peru—until you come out, that is to say. How long will that be, I wonder, my own Dora? What an unlucky beggar I am to be torn away from you like this! You are to write to me every mail, remember. I shall always expect a letter; you won't disappoint me, will you?"

"No; I will write every mail."

Dora's face was white, and there were black lines under her eyes, but her voice sounded cheerful. She had made up her mind not to give away; she would not worry him with unnecessary lamentations and repinings.

"That's right," said Walter hopefully; "and I have got such a brilliant idea. One has heard such heaps of stories about people meeting after a long time, and not knowing one another. Now I don't like to think that that could be possible with us."

She shook her head.

"It would be altogether impossible. If I did not see you for fifty years I should know you among a crowd of strangers."

"Don't talk of such horrible things. Fifty years! It's absurd, of course, this fancy of mine, when we are sure to meet in two years' time at the latest. But I want you to be photographed every time you go up to town, and send me one, then I shall be able to see exactly how my darling is looking; and the fashion, too—it will keep me up in the latest style of dress, and prevent me from falling into utter barbarism. I shall send you my carte as well, as a matter of course. Do you think it's a good plan?"

"Yes," said Dora; "I won't forget."

She was bent upon keeping her resolution, but somehow the words would not come; she tried to talk naturally, and to remember what she would have said if this great sorrow had not been weighing on her heart, and she could not. These last half-hours are among the saddest moments in our lives, and yet here was Dora cherishing the very seconds, and looking nervously at the clock. Another three minutes gone. How could she bear it?

"Walter!" she said suddenly. "I

should so like to walk to Sunset Corner; will you come?"

"Yes. Don't be long putting on your things; I have only a quarter of an hour more."

"My hat is in the hall, and I'll take Fanny's cloak."

She put her arm into his, and they went out into the garden.

It had been snowing in the morning, and even now a few soft flakes were falling; there was no wind, and the sky was dull and grey. The boughs of the fir-trees were heavily laden with snow, and every now and then a little clump got shaken off, and fell with a thud on the path at their feet.

Dora's favourite seat had been swept, and it was at all times sheltered there.

Walter leant against the tree, where he had sat on that sunny afternoon, nearly two years ago, when he had amused himself with drawing out the shy girl with the lovely eyes, whom fate had thrown in his way.

"I shall always think of you when I'm away, just as you were that first day; do you recollect? Ah, Dora!" holding her hand tightly between his, "why must I go away and leave you?" Then he went on passionately: "Say it all over again; promise that, come what may, you will be my wife, as I vow that I will think only of you, and of no other woman."

It was hard, it was exceedingly hard, this parting.

"I promise," said Dora. A great fir-apple fell heavily from the fir-tree at her feet, but she did not heed it. "And, Walter, I have netted you a little purse, it's all I had time to make, and don't open it until you get on board ship. What I put in it is my very own; they know nothing about it; it will help a little to get the new home ready—our home. Walter, everything that I have is yours, you know, and, oh! I wish I could do something to help you."

Silently he took her gift, and then, with his eyes fixed on her face, he said:

"You do help me; you have given me what is more precious than the wide world besides, you have given me your love."

He raised her hands to his lips and kissed them.

"Dalton, Dalton!" Stephen was plodding his way through the snow; "the carriage has been round this five minutes; you'll miss your train."

"I can't go, I won't! Dora, must I leave you?"

Now she was quite calm.

"Say good-bye to me here; then go with Stephen. The time won't seem long, my darling; you will be so busy, and I shall do all I can not to be a hindrance to you."

The colour flushed into her young face as she once more met the eager gaze of his eyes.

"Dalton, come! you can't expect the horses to get to the station in less than twenty minutes with the roads so heavy."

Stephen had waited till the last possible second, and now, according to his fashion, betook himself to grumbling, in order to hide his sympathy with the lovers.

"Stop, I'm coming," called Walter in a forced voice, and Stephen stopped, stamping the snow off his thick boots.

Walter unclasped Dora's hands; she was holding his arm as if she would never let him go.

"Good-bye, my love; may God bless you!" she whispered.

Once more he kissed her.

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" She heard Stephen's exclamation, "By Jove! we shall be late!" she heard the carriage drive off, and the iron gate bang behind it. She stooped and picked up the fir-apple (she remembered now that it had touched him as it fell to the ground), and then she went back through the snow alone.

THE BEAUTIFUL DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

A GOOD many years ago, the theft of a portrait, supposed to be of this lady, excited much public attention, and introduced many, who had no previous knowledge, to the lady and to her history.

Her story has certainly a great, though not a very dramatic interest, as that of a wayward, attractive, petted, repentant person; for whose peculiar conduct spoiling, public flatteries, and rare natural gifts were accountable.

She was the eldest daughter of the first Earl Spencer, born in 1774, and married in 1791, when only seventeen. At this time she was described as "a perfect Hebe," in the bloom of health, her hair beautiful, her teeth good, and a most fascinating smile. She was tall, though rather awkward and ungraceful in her limbs, wanting dignity in her movements, except in dancing, in which accomplishment she excelled. "Nature," says Lady Harcourt, recalling her, "never formed a more charming creature." She was affectionate, steady in her friendships,

thoroughly good-natured; but, like all such natures, she was impulsive, easily led, and yielding. She lacked judgment. "She enjoyed more admiration than I ever saw," adds Lady Harcourt, who has left some pleasant notes on the "beauty," which have been printed for private circulation by Mr. E. Harcourt, of Nuneham.

The Duke of Devonshire, who had selected so young a wife, was a good deal older, but of a curious tranquillity and indolence of mind which indisposed him to making any exertion to direct or check the course of this gay young creature. He passively indulged her in everything. Fire and water, it was said, were not more opposed. He was indifferent to everything, while to her everything almost was an object. For some years they had no children to divert her thoughts from the world to which she was so devoted. Gradually her taste for frivolity and excitement increased. She was seen surrounded by the gay and profligate, who by their pleasant devotion and flatteries encouraged her in her foolish course. Gradually she fell into whims and extravagances of the most costly kind. In the mornings her rooms would be seen crowded with greedy tradesmen tempting her with all kinds of gewgaws and jewels, which she was not firm enough to deny herself; and this with an allowance of fifteen hundred pounds a year pin-money—a handsome one, truly, but which was utterly insufficient for another fatal taste she had contracted, that of gaming. To gratify this, and conceal it from her husband, of whom she was in awe, she had recourse to a hundred subterfuges, but at last her position had to be disclosed, and on her showing much repentance, and making abundant promises of reform, her good-natured husband paid all her debts.

As was to be expected, she soon relapsed. Her quick excitable nature, casting about for further stimulant, soon found it in political excitement. She flung herself with ardour into the contentions of the day, and, passing some time in France, learned and relished the new theories of the clever men there, and on her return devoted herself to Mr. Fox and his party. This was another unfortunate lapse, as it dragged her before the public, which lampooned and caricatured the fair politician without mercy. There were political revels at Carlton House on Mr. Fox's victories, where the fair duchess was always a conspicuous object of attraction.

Mr. Raikes thus recalls her:

"Lady Bessborough was a leading character, with her sister the Duchess, in those entertainments at Devonshire House, which many years ago engrossed all the wit and fashion of London society for a long period, since quoted as the era of refinement and pleasure. Even Lady Granville now, when she meets an ancient votary of those days, illustrated by her mother, will say, 'He, too, remembers Devonshire House.'

"The late Duke was one of those impassable characters, who allow nothing to ruffle their serenity, high born, well bred, with all the formality of the *vieille cour*. He was the head of the Whig party, the Duchess the active mover in all the cabals of that day. I remember the sensation created in town by her personal canvass for the buff and blue interest, at the famous election of Charles Fox for Westminster, when she drove about in a splendid carriage to solicit the votes of the different tradesmen. One butcher was refractory, and stipulated for a salute, as the only price at which he would sell his suffrage, and the beautiful Duchess yielded her cheek to the greasy suitor. The streets then resounded with the following ballad:

"A Piccadilly beauty
Went out on canvassing duty
To help the great distresses
Of poor little Carlo Khan.

"The butchers and the bakers,
The grocers, undertakers,
The milliners and toymen,
All vote for Carlo Khan.

"In those days the men of fashion were scholars as well as wits, and Fitzpatrick celebrated the same event in a Latin epigram which was much admired:

"*Quæ dea sublimi vehitur per compita curru?*
An Juno, an Pallas, an Venus ipsa venit?
Si genus aspicias Juno est, si dicta Minerva,
Si spectes oculos, mater amoris erit."

Meanwhile, as she pursued this reckless course, her debts and embarrassments increased. Lady Charlotte Bury, in her amusing diary, gives some curious evidence of the desperate shifts to which this unfortunate lady was reduced, and there is something quaint in the way in which her friend Mr. D—— assisted her.

"I heard a great deal from a man of business to whom she was frequently indebted for assistance. He gave me a curious autograph of hers.

"London, 18th Dec., 1779.

"MR. D—— having lent me two thousand six hundred and fifty pounds, I do hereby promise to pay him two hundred and fifty pounds every three months. at the

usual quarter days, and continue to pay that sum quarterly to him or his heirs (allowing five per cent. interest, and five per cent. for insurance of my life per annum), until principal, interest, and insurance shall be fully paid.

"(Signed) 'G—— D——,'

"My agreement is, that in case the Duchess does not pay me two hundred and fifty pounds quarterly, that I shall acquaint the Duke of D—— with this transaction; and her Grace has promised, in case of her death or other accidents, to leave in writing a request that I may be paid, as I have lent her the money to relieve her from play debts, under a solemn promise that she will not play in future.

"(Signed) 'J. D——,'

"This is a melancholy record of the folly of this great Lady, who was one of the best-hearted persons in the world. I have often heard it told of her, that if she had money set apart for pleasure, or for the payment of debts, and that some individual came to her in pecuniary distress, she would always relieve him or her, and leave her own difficulties unprovided for."

The best sketch of her when she was in all the bloom of beauty, in 1791, is given by the vivacious Fanny Burney, whose admirable and lively, and most dramatic scenes and portraits are scarcely appreciated as they deserve to be. She was paying a visit to Lady Spencer, then living in Bath, during the season.

"Presently followed two ladies. Lady Spencer, with a look and manner warmly announcing pleasure in what she was doing, then introduced me to the first of them, saying, 'Duchess of Devonshire, Miss Burney.' She made me a very civil compliment upon hoping my health was recovering; and Lady Spencer then, slightly, and as if unavoidably, said, 'Lady Elizabeth Forster.'

"I did not find so much beauty in her as I expected, notwithstanding the variations of accounts; but I found far more of manner, politeness, and gentle quiet. She seems by nature to possess the highest animal spirits, but she appeared to me not happy. I thought she looked oppressed and thin, though there is a native cheerfulness about her which I fancy scarce ever deserts her.

"There is in her face, especially when she speaks, a sweetness of good-humour and obligingness that seem to be the natural and instinctive qualities of her disposition,

joined to an openness of countenance that announces her endowed, by nature, with a character intended wholly for honesty, fairness, and good purposes.

"She now conversed with me wholly, and in so soberly sensible and quiet a manner, as I had imagined incompatible with her powers. Too much and too little credit have variously been given her. We talked over my late tour, Bath waters, and the King's illness. This, which was led to by accident, was here a tender subject, considering her heading the regency squadron. She was extremely well-bred in all she said herself and seemed willing to keep up the subject. I fancy no one has just in the same way treated it with her Grace before; however, she took all in good part, though to have found me retired in discontent had perhaps been more congenial to her."

The lady who was with her, and her bosom friend, was a person of no ordinary attractions. Indeed she was so alluring that Mrs. Gibbon declared that no man could withstand her, that she could make the Lord Chancellor come down from off his woolsack. This lady was destined to take her place, and to succeed her as Duchess of Devonshire.

The poor beauty was at one time drawn into a strange entanglement which had well-nigh produced the most serious family confusion. She had two little girls, and was eager for a son and heir, and it has been often repeated; and there seems little reason to doubt the story, that she arranged with her friend to exchange children, and that the duchess received her friend's boy.

That some such story was connected with the late Duke of Devonshire is well-known. It is public property that the perpetual celibacy of his grace was the result of an arrangement by which he was to wear the title by consent for his life, it then passing to his cousin the rightful heir. Lady Charlotte Campbell learned: "The present Duke of Devonshire appeared for a length of time to have a strong aversion to his mother-in-law, the sometime Lady Dover, and one day, when she hung over him and kissed his forehead, the Duke turned away as though he had been touched by a basilisk. But subsequently, after his repeated visits to her when she resided chiefly at Rome, his manner entirely changed, and he evinced the utmost pleasure in her society, and the greatest affection for her person. It was said that this change in his feelings towards her was wrought by the Duchess

having declared to him the secret of his birth, and his being her own child. It is also said that this great man cannot marry. Rumour says, the Duke is only suffered by the rightful heir to enjoy the title and estates for his lifetime, in order not to disgrace the family by a disclosure of the truth. But possibly the whole of these suppositions are false, and perhaps the Duke has never married because he would not be espoused for the sake of his great name and fortune. This romance in real life was once dramatised under the title of *The False Friends*, and that by a friend of the Cavendish family; yet, strange to say, the authoress of the play did not incur their displeasure."

To her sister, Lady Duncannon, afterwards Lady Bessborough, this impulsive and interesting woman was united in the closest attachment. Both, however, were cut off almost in their prime. Soon a tendency to consumption appeared in the duchess's case, and this late hours and constant dissipation gradually developed. Such was her spirit that she struggled on gallantly against violent fits of illness, after one of which she actually lost one of her eyes and was permanently disfigured. Against this trial, awful in her case, she bore up with the most wonderful sweetness and patience, and it was noted by her friends that all her follies had not disturbed the early religious feeling that had been implanted in her. When she was dining at Lord Stafford's, on March 6th, 1806, she was seized with her last illness, which was at once found to be fatal. In a delirium she reproached herself with all her extravagance and wasted life.

So touching was her repentance that "even the natural apathy of the Duke gave way, and bathed in tears, he assured her that if she recovered all would be forgotten and forgiven." During this last scene Devonshire House was crowded with persons coming to enquire after her. And it must have been an additional trial that at the moment her political friends had at last come to power, after so long an ostracism. She was forty-nine years old at her death.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER VIII. THE WIDOW'S CURSE.

HILDA's home—that pleasant little house among the dykes—was a small cottage-like building, with two round

thatched gables, more like two good-sized bee-hives than anything else. It was an unpretending sort of place, and yet people, as they passed, turned to look at it, for the rambling irregular bit of garden that skirted it on all sides was a glory of colour, aflame just now with patches of golden marigolds, but at all times of the year bright and gay with whatever blossoms were in season. Between the cottage and the road stood three apple-trees, in spring-time weighed down by a fragrant load of pale pink and white bloom; now bending under a wealth of apples.

One of these trees stood over against the rustic porch (thatched, like the gables up above); the other two, on either side the wide low window that looked on to the road, their boughs almost meeting, forming an archway of greenery through which the window peered.

Here, on the wide window-ledge, might often be seen a great shallow brown delf dish, filled with blossoms of every hue, for Hester Devenant loved flowers, and seemed to have caught something of her husband's artistic taste in arranging them—a strange yet not uncommon instance of apparent inconsistency of character.

But on the window-shelf to-day was seen no dish of delf full of marigold, iris, and feathery London-pride.

Birds chirped and twittered in the apple-boughs; Hilda's pigeons wheeled about the chimneys, and preened their feathers on the comb of the roof; in the little garden the marigolds stood staring at the sun; the golden-barred bees hummed in the delicately-tinted chalice of the iris. Nature's colours do not pale because a terrible drama is being enacted close at hand, and never, perhaps, had the cottage among the dykes looked fairer and brighter than on this autumn afternoon, when the window between the apple-trees was a blind unseeing thing, close-curtained to shut out the glint of the western sunshine and the sight of the flowers, and Gabriel Devenant lay dead in the room where Hilda had sung so sweetly as she toiled at her worsted web, only a day ago.

Hilda had crept unnoticed into the darkened chamber, hallowed by the silent presence of the dead. A black night of sorrow and wonder filled her little soul. No one had taken much heed of her since she came downstairs that morning, hushed and awe-struck with the feeling of awaking to life to find it something new and strange.

filled, too, with a bitter sense of loss for which she could find no name.

A neighbour, brought there as much by curiosity as sympathy, had been helping Mrs. Devenant to clean up the place that was always clean, so that it seemed as if it were Saturday instead of the middle of the week. The door-step was dazzling with white-stone, wrought in a certain cunning pattern for which the said neighbour was famous. Here and there, on floor and shelf, lay little sprigs of thyme and lad's-love—a time-honoured custom when Death entered a house. The neighbour wore her Sunday gown, pinned up round the waist, and covered by a vast white apron, for fear of injury, and all who came in or went out spoke in hushed tones, with bated breath, as though they feared to wake the sleeper in the room that looked out through the archway of apple-boughs. Thus had the day worn on, Hilda, feeling as though an unlawful liberty was hers, and all the reins of government relaxed, wandering hither and thither, always bearing within her breast that sense of loss and silence; always listening, unconsciously to herself, poor little one! for the voice she should never hear again; always wondering if "mon camarade" was not somewhere, wanting his "petite reine," and seeking for her vainly, as she for him.

Then, as the shadows were lengthening, and the sunlight began to glow ruddily from behind the pollards on the marshes, Hilda stole into the quiet room where the dead man lay.

Those were not the days in which loving hands strove to make death beautiful; and, in truth, Gabriel Devenant cut but a grim figure taking his last rest. His arms were rigid at his sides, no flower rested on breast or pillow; a sheet covered him from head to foot, showing the tall gaunt outline of his form in sharply defined lines.

Over the window of the room a large sheet was carefully pinned, through which the light from the sunset filtered palely. One solitary sun-ray had stolen through a tiny chink in the veiling that covered the casement, and there shone, dusty but beautiful, like a golden shaft striving to pierce the quiet heart of the dead.

A less healthy-minded child than Hilda might have been afraid of such ghastly surroundings, even though the intruding sunbeam kept her company among them.

But Hilda knew no fear.

True, he lay there stark and stiff, never

raising a caressing hand to touch her hair, or calling on her name; but still it was himself and not another.

Dead or living, silent or murmuring loving words in her ear, and telling fairy legends of the woods and glades, he was still "mon camarade."

The silence and stillness, the broken routine of daily life, the pitying looks that had been cast upon her through the day, all these things brought home to Hilda the cruel truth that a great sorrow had befallen her.

But it may be doubted if she fully realised its nature.

She had been sorely frightened the night before, when her sleep was broken into by confused sounds, the stagger of feet bearing a heavy load, the rustle of many whispering voices. At noon, when strange men came to the cottage, entering the room where her father lay, in single file, and stepping as if the floor were paved with eggs, she had been glad to hide her face in the damp and uncomfortable folds of the neighbour's apron. She was ever so glad when they came out again—still stepping as if on eggs—but adopting a brisk and lively demeanour as they got out of the house, and appearing quite as glad to go as Hilda was to see them go.

All these things had been sources of wonder and of fear.

Now, wonder and love held dual sway, and fear was not. It had died in the presence of the dead. The future was little in Hilda's thoughts. That the silence brooding over all around her was an eternal thing; that the voice that had died out of her young life should be heard no more for ever; that the closed eyes would open upon her no more, the cold hand never touch and clasp her own—these aspects of death were as yet hidden from her ken.

As a restraining hand laid upon her was the hush and stirless stillness of it all. She looked up at the dazzling sunbeam and thought that it had no business there. It might wake him, who was so fast—fast asleep.

Then she looked down, her notice caught by a faint rustling somewhere, and felt a kind of awe and anger at the sight of the grey kitten—foolish hardy creature!—playing with a ball of darning-worsted under a chair, coquetting with the leg of the chair to get at it, tapping it with a playful paw, making believe it was a mouse and in danger of escaping.

Puss had followed her little mistress

into the darkened chamber, and saw no harm in whiling away the time by a bit of a game with the ball of wool left there unheeded since the day before; but Hilda—gravely scandalised—stooped to catch the culprit, huddled it into her apron, and so, laden with a little purring freight, went up close beside the figure on the stretchered, drawing the covering gently, not timidly, aside.

How lonely he looked lying like that! And, oh, how cold he was! Her soft palm touching the marble cheek crept with the contact. Still, it was pity and not fear that made her breath come in a little sob. His hair was dank and clammy; his lips had no smile for his "petite reine." How strange—how strange it all was!

That warm bundle of fur that was called Pussy and nestled so closely to her bosom grew all at once to be a something comforting and sustaining. The natural shrinking from death and clinging to life that is common to all humanity was clutching at Hilda's heart, and yet she could not bear to leave what had been her father all alone.

"Mon père!" she said, speaking very softly—for, after all, it might be wrong to try and wake him, and a sense of guilt was stealing over her, and then, with a sob this time: "Qu'as tu, mon père?"

For all answer the sharp opening of the door where Hester stood a moment in dismay, swept the child from her feet, and bore her, kitten and all, across the passage into the warm kitchen. The neighbour was brewing some comforting concoction in a pannikin, bending over it lovingly and tasting it in hazardingly hot sips.

"She has been in there," said Hester, setting the child down before the fire—not with passionate claspings and kissings, as another sorrowing mother might have done, but with stern disapproval.

The neighbour almost dropped the spoon into the pannikin, and stared wildly at Hilda, while Mrs. Devenant went back to turn the key in the forbidden door.

Hilda looked from one to the other, squeezing the kitten so hard in her bewilderment that it gave forth a piteous mew.

Hilda saw that the neighbour's prospective enjoyment in the steaming contents of the pannikin was damped; saw that "Mothie's" face looked whiter and more set and stern than it had done all day, and that these sad consequences were the fruit of her own fault. And yet she could not bring herself to feel guilty of wrong-

doing, for, after all, she had only been to see her father, being so very, very weary of the long day in which he had had no part.

A new tide of interest and curiosity set in towards Gabriel Devenant's home and widow that night. First, because it had transpired that all investigations into the bank robbery were to be conducted with closed doors and in the strictest secrecy, so that several days would have to elapse before any particulars of the enquiry and its results should come to light. Also, Mr. Alison Stirling having undergone an operation at the hands of the London oculist whom he had gone south to consult, could not at present undertake a journey. Hence the excitement of seeing and hearing how he "took" the news of the catastrophe was postponed indefinitely.

Beside all this, that supreme object of interest, the Bow Street runner, had turned out, to a certain extent, a failure.

Not professionally—no one was as yet in a position to judge him in that aspect—but one or two townsmen had caught a glimpse of him, and reported that he "wasna much of a chap to look at," being low-sized, a bit knock-kneed, and owning no kind of "presence."

These flying reports encouraged evil-doers, leading them to speak slightly of the rigours of the law in general and of the detective branch of it in particular, and diverted public attention to Hester Devenant and the way she "took" her sorrow.

Which was assuredly a way in which no other woman would have taken it.

Several widows related their experience of such times as that which had now come upon Hester, taking much credit to themselves for the sighs they had sighed, the sobs they had heaved, the tears they had shed, and the vast amount of trouble they had given to everybody about them.

Hester, with eyes that seemed to see nothing near, but ever to be gazing at something far away; Hester, with set pale lips, and passionless, steadfast voice; was a mystery they could no more read than they could have deciphered a book written in Sanscrit. Long since everyone had agreed to call her "odd," to visit her rarely and discuss her at all points after each of these rare occasions. She was one who cared naught for public opinion, for general custom, for criticism adverse or admiring. It was thought in those days a "flighty" thing for a matron to wear her hair uncovered, but Hester's magnificent

coils were visible in all their glory to every eye. Other women said it would "look better" if she wore a cap. Those who had no hair to speak of, or whose front parting was like a very broad gravel-walk in a very little lawn, expressed this opinion most vehemently, adding with an air of wounded modesty that there was something "unseemly" in Mrs. Devenant's behaviour in this matter. These remarks and others akin to them were always uttered behind Mrs. Devenant's back, and never even hinted at before her face, for, as has been said before, she was a woman much feared and little loved.

In truth, there were many who harboured an inward conviction that she—more or less—deserved the cruel blow that had fallen upon her; that it was a wholesome discipline for one who carried her head so high to be brought low and taught a lesson of humility.

Hence arose a longing to watch the wholesome process in question, and two would-be sympathisers "dropped in" while the neighbour was enjoying the contents of the pannikin, and vainly pressing it upon the new-made widow. They longed to make offers of assistance in procuring suitable mourning garb; above all they burned to express a hope that that mass of rippling tresses at the back of her head would shortly be covered by a decent widow's cap; but their courage quickly oozed out at their finger-ends. They sat on the edge of their chairs; sipped timorously, and as if it scalded them, at the comforting mixture; spoke under their breath, got the neighbour to show them the corpse, taking the occasion to ask a hurried question or two when the door was shut; and then departed, dissatisfied with the results obtained, with themselves, and most of all with Hester Devenant. She might feel her loss, they said, but she didn't look like it. It was wrong to judge, but occasionally impossible to refrain. If a thing was forced upon your notice, and shoved under your nose, you could not make believe you didn't see it, since, to suppose such blindness on your own part, would be to suppose yourself a fool. We were told to "kiss the rod," but Mrs. Devenant didn't look like kissing anything, or anybody. We were told to recognise the chastening Hand, but Mrs. Devenant didn't look like recognising any hand at all; in fact seemed to regard the offer of sympathy as an intrusion, and, really, to get her to answer a question was like drawing a tooth.

They also grumbled in that the widow lived at an out-of-the-way place, all up hill, too, which made it worse for dwellers in the town; and who could have told that so fine a sunset would be followed by such a blustering night, and persons blown about like anything, as their only reward for the paying of a charitable visit, received in anything but a kindly spirit? It certainly was a lonely road after dusk, the road that here and there skirted the glistening dykes, and was made all the more dreary by the occasional tinkle of a cattle-bell from the scattered herds that grazed upon the fine soft turf lying between the water-courses.

Yet it had its beauties too, for the dykes shone like mirrors in the grey gloom, and branches, caught by the wind, tossed high like plumes against the sky.

Wind-tossed, too, was the long riding-cloak wrapped about the gaunt figure of Geoffrey Stirling as he passed those gleaming mirrors under the shadow of the pollards, coming up from the town. He walked hurriedly, as one who goes upon an urgent errand, and yet something in his whole bearing seemed to betray a secret reluctance, a shrinking from the inevitable. He glanced neither to right nor left. Holding the folds of his cloak firmly across his breast, with head lowered and eyes on the ground, he seemed, indeed, a shadowy traveller through a world of shadows.

Gabriel Devenant's cottage stood blind and dark. No faintest light gleamed in any of its windows. It looked in truth a fitting haven for the dead, a place from out of which all life and light had died, and round about whose walls the wind moaned with sobbing wail.

The little gate creaked on its hinges as Geoffrey Stirling passed in; a step in the house-place lingered at the sound; the door opened, and there stood Hester Devenant, a lighted cresset in her hand.

It shone with a faint radiance, showing her pallid face; her lips firmly set in a hard line of pain; her eyes, in which for the nonce all the fire and life within her seemed to burn, fixed on the man who stood upon the threshold of her widowed home, his head bared and bowed in a silent yet subtle expression of sympathy with, and reverence for, her sorrow and her desolate condition.

"Step in, sir," she said; "you are welcome. I felt sure you would come—sooner or later," and stood aside to let him pass.

The door of the common living-room stood open. A fire burned there cheerily, filling the quaint old-fashioned place with dancing shadows that played hide-and-seek in the polished doors of the dark oak corner cupboards.

The mantel-shelf was high and narrow, and held a second cresset; a large oak chair (Gabriel's once) stood by the hearth; a low stool near it (little Hilda's); and on the other side a high-backed seat of wicker-work drawn to the table, whereon lay a heap of something very fine, and soft, and white, together with all a woman's implements of work.

"I should have come sooner, and not later, Mrs. Devenant," said Geoffrey Stirling, warming his hands at the blaze, and looking furtively round the homely yet comfortable chamber; "but for calls upon my time that could not be set aside."

"You have been busy at the bank?" she said, lifting as she spoke the heap of fine soft stuff from the table, and laying it on her lap.

"I have been busy at the bank. I am weary—worn out with anxious thought, perplexed, troubled beyond all words to say. But I felt your trouble to be deeper, heavier than mine—in some sort the growth of mine—and I could not rest to-night until I had been here to offer you a few words—but few, Mrs. Devenant, for I do not believe in long-winded sympathy—of heart-felt sorrow for your sorrow, of bitter regret for the cause of it."

The fine white stuff was passing through her fingers; she seemed to be shaping it into the form of a loose and shapeless garment, and to be so intent upon its due proportion that she could not glance at the speaker as she answered him.

"You are kind and good," she said; "no new thing for Mr. Geoffrey to be, as all Becklington knows; and I am grateful rating your goodness at its true worth. Your own trouble must be nigh as heavy as mine, since it is more for others than yourself, and to such a one as you, what can be harder?"

He leant his hand against the high mantel, and his forehead on his hand; and she, seeing him so stand, raised her eyes, glittering like stars, fierce, defiant, full of cruel bitter pain, and let her work drop down upon her lap.

"It is hard," he said, more as if speaking to himself than to her—"it is a weary, weary load."

"And yet," she went on in a dull even

voice that told of a strain of strong and resolute self-repression, "there has been comfort mingled with your sorrow, but with mine—none."

"Comfort?" he said, turning sharply, yet not in time to catch the glitter of the eyes that were once more intent upon her work; "comfort?"

"Yes," she answered, speaking with quiet persistence; "was it no comfort in the midst of all that storm and turmoil to learn how the hearts of our townfolk love and trust you? Was it no comfort to learn the power of your voice to hold them silent—no comfort to see that they felt for you as much as for themselves, as much as for their wives and little ones, beggared, robbed, ruined? Was it nothing to gain such a triumph as this in such an hour?"

He had turned once more to the fire, and she saw him pass his hand across his brow, dank with sweat, as he listened.

"I came here to-night, Mrs. Devenant, to speak of your sorrow, not of mine."

"I know you did," she answered softly, "and I thank you for coming. Many have come here to-day on the same errand, but in a different spirit—a spirit that has struck me dumb, turned me to stone, stifled the words on my lips, and the breath in my breast. Curious folks, I reckon, Mr. Geoffrey, crave to see how a new-made widow bears her grief, so they have been to see how I bear mine, and have gone away as wise as they came. There was no pity for me in their hearts, no sorrow for the fatherless. One neighbour came to give me a hand to-day—she is but just gone; but even in her heart was no real pity. She asked as many questions as she dare, and got no answers; but you, you are different to these, you come to me in the true spirit of charity, as you have come to many another; your generous soul is full of pity for the widow and the fatherless; to you I will show all my heart—to you I will bare my grief."

Half-turned, watching her furtively and with well-restrained amaze, Geoffrey Stirling listened; and again she saw the shimmer of sweat-drops on his brow. For now her eyes gazed unflinchingly upon him, her lips twitched as she spoke, her hands were clenched upon a fold of the soft white woollen stuff upon her lap.

"The solid ground seems to have gone from beneath my feet," she said with a passionate gesture, while the thrill of a terrible grief was in her voice; "the stars

seem to have fallen from my heaven; the sun ceased to shine upon me for ever, and yet my eyes shed no tears. I cannot weep like other women and find ease; it is my heart—my heart that weeps, and the tears that it sheds are blood."

Geoffrey Stirling almost fancied she had become unconscious of his presence, as she rocked herself to and fro in a tearless agony.

But in this he was wrong.

Hester was intensely conscious of his nearness; and no passing expression that crossed his face escaped her.

That she experienced a certain sense of relief in this expression of her pain, in the wail of this, the first moan that had passed her white lips since she drew her dead from the cruel dyke, may be taken for granted.

But for all that she watched keenly its effect on him.

"What can I say to comfort you?" he said, after the silence that had followed those last wild words of hers. "What can I say?"

"Nothing," she answered, drawing a long shuddering sigh, and taking up her work again; "no one can touch a sorrow such as mine. Even God cannot give me back my dead. So sorrow and I must keep each other company as best we may, and here, working at my husband's shroud, I must think my own thoughts—they are more like curses than thoughts sometimes, Mr. Geoffrey—and dree my weird, as Scotch folk say."

* Seeing him start at the word "shroud," and give a hurried glance at the heap of soft white stuff upon her knee, she promptly answered start and glance.

"The poor have to do many things that the rich have done for them; but even if this were not so, I would have no other hand than mine fashion my husband's last garment. You have heard people call me an odd woman, Mr. Geoffrey, but I hardly think you knew how odd I was—until to-night."

When next he spoke, it was with an infinite tenderness.

"I dare not, in truth, Mrs. Devenant, try to comfort, even by one poor word of mine, such a sorrow as you have shown me to-night. I would only ask you to bear in mind that if there is anything——"

"There is nothing," she put in hurriedly. Then he turned to go.

But she laid her hand upon his arm—a shapely hand, even though roughened by toil.

"Tell me," she said, "when will the best—or the worst—that is to be known, be known about the bank?"

"I cannot tell," he answered, tossing back the hair from his brow, as if he were putting aside a weight that pressed upon his brain; "I cannot tell."

"Maybe never until the coming of the Day that shall tell all things."

As Hester said this, she turned away, letting her hand fall from his arm.

After which, he still keeping an unbroken silence, she took the cresset from the shelf to light him to the door.

But in the passage she stopped, raised the light high above her head so that its gleam should fall full upon his face, and laid her hand upon the lock of a closed door.

"Will you come and see—my husband?"

A moment her glittering eyes held him; but he shrank aside.

"No," he said; "I—I have been ill—I must spare myself any possible strain or shock. Perhaps I was wrong to come."

With a faint strange smile, Hester let go the handle of the key she had been about to turn.

"As you will, Mr. Geoffrey," she said, setting down her light and following him to the door.

The stormy blustering night had grown no quieter. Rain had fallen, and the leaves were wet, shining in a pallid fitful moonlight that gleamed through drifting clouds.

Hester, standing at the gate, watched, by this dim uncertain light, to see the tall figure of Geoffrey Stirling pass on out of sight, a shadow moving among shadowy boughs and drifting clouds.

And as the distance grew between them, she lifted her clasped hands to Heaven, crying in a voice none the less fierce because it was hardly louder than a whisper:

"God's curse—the widow's curse—be on your head—liar, murderer, thief!"

Then she started as though God had sent an angel to chide the utterance of that passionate malediction, for a little hand was plucking at her gown, and Hilda, sobbing, cried to "Mothie" to come in "out of the dark, dark night."

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXV. MR. BARRY AND
MR. JUNIPER.

THE joy in Bolsover Terrace was intense when Mrs. Carroll returned home. "We are all to have three hundred and fifty pound fortunes when we get husbands," said Georgina, anticipating at once the pleasures of matrimony.

"I am to have four hundred and fifty," said Amelia. "I do think he might have made it five hundred pounds. If I had it to give away I never would show the cloven foot about the last fifty pounds."

"But he's only to have four hundred pounds," said Sophia. "Your things are to be bought with the other fifty pounds."

"I never can do it for fifty pounds," said Amelia. "I did not expect that I was to find my own trousseau out of my own fortune."

"Girls, how can you be so ungrateful?" said their mother.

"I'm not ungrateful, mamma," said Potsey. "I shall be very much obliged when I get my three hundred and fifty pounds. How long will it be?"

"You've got to find the young man first, Potsey. I don't think you'll ever do that," said Georgina, who was rather proud of her own good looks.

This took place on the evening of the day on which Mrs. Carroll had gone to London, where Mr. Carroll was about attending to some of those duties of conviviality in the performance of which he was so indefatigable. On the following morning at twelve o'clock he was still in bed. It was a well-known fact in the family that on such an occasion he would lie in bed, and that before twelve o'clock

he would have managed to extract from his wife's little hoardings at any rate two bottles of soda-water and two glasses of some alcoholic mixture which was generally called brandy. "I'll have a gin and potash, Sophie," he had said on this occasion with reference to the second dose, "and do make haste. I wish you'd go yourself, because that girl always drinks some of the sperrits."

"What;—go to the gin-shop?"

"It's a most respectable publican's,—just round the corner."

"Indeed, I shall do nothing of the kind. You've no feeling about your daughters at all." But Sophie went on her errand, and in order to protect her father's small modicum of "sperrits" she slipped on her cloak and walked out so as to be able to watch the girl. Still I think that the maiden managed to get a sip as she left the bar. The father in the meantime, with his head between his hands, was ruminating on the "cocked up way which girls have who can't do a turn for their father."

But with the gin and potash, and with Sophie, Mr. Juniper made his appearance. He was a well-featured, tall man, but he looked the stable and he smelt of it. His clothes, no doubt, were decent, but they were made by some tailor who must surely work for horsey men and no others. There is a class of men who always choose to show by their outward appearance that they belong to horses, and they succeed. Mr. Juniper was one of them. Though good-looking he was anything but young, verging by appearance on fifty years. "So he has been at it again, Miss Sophie," said Juniper. Sophie, who did not like being detected in the performance of her filial duties, led the way in silence into the house, and disappeared upstairs with the gin and potash. Mr. Juniper turned into the parlour, where was Mrs. Carroll

with the other girls. She was still angry, as angry as she could be, with her husband, who on being informed that morning of what his wife had done, had called her brother "a beastly, stingy old beau," because he had cut Amelia off with four hundred and fifty instead of five hundred pounds. Mr. Carroll probably knew that Mr. Juniper would not take his daughter without the entirety of the sum stipulated, and would allow no portion of it to be expended on wedding dresses.

"Oh, Dick, is this you?" said Amelia; "I suppose you've come for your news." Mr. Juniper's christian-name was Richard. On this occasion he showed no affectionate desire to embrace his betrothed.

"Yes, it's me," he said, and then gave his hand all round, first to Mrs. Carroll and then to the girls.

"I've seen Mr. Grey," said Mrs. Carroll. But Dick Juniper held his tongue and sat down and twiddled his hat.

"Where have you come from?" asked Georgina.

"From the Brompton Road. I come down on a 'bus."

"You've come from Tattersall's, young man," said Amelia.

"Then I just didn't." But to tell the truth he had come from Tattersall's, and it might be difficult to follow up the workings of his mind and find out why he had told the lie. Of course it was known that when in London much of his business was done at Tattersall's. But the horsey man is generally on the alert to take care that no secret of his trade escapes from him unawares. And it may be that he was thus prepared for a gratuitous lie.

"Uncle's gone a deal further than ever I expected," said Amelia.

"He's been most generous to all the girls," said Mrs. Carroll, moved nearly to tears.

Mr. Juniper did not care very much about "all the girls," thinking that the uncle's affection at the present moment should be shown to the one girl who had found a husband, and thinking also that if the husband was to be secured, the proper way of doing so would be by liberality to him. Amelia had said that her uncle had gone further than she expected. Mr. Juniper concluded from this that he had not gone as far as he had been asked, and boldly resolved, at the spur of the moment, to stand by his demand. "Five hundred pounds ain't much," he said.

"Dick, don't make a beast of your-

self," said Amelia. Upon this Dick only smiled.

He continually twiddled his hat for three or four minutes, and then rose up straight. "I suppose," said he, "I had better go upstairs and talk to the old man. I see'd Miss Sophie taking a pick-up to him; so I suppose he'll be able to talk."

"Why shouldn't he talk?" said Mrs. Carroll. But she quite understood what Mr. Juniper's words were intended to imply.

"It don't always follow," said Juniper as he walked out of the room.

"Now there'll be a row in the house;—you see if there isn't," said Amelia. But Mrs. Carroll expressed her opinion that the man must be the most ungrateful of creatures if he kicked up a row on the present occasion. "I don't know so much about that, mamma," said Amelia.

Mr. Juniper walked upstairs with heavy, slow steps, and knocked at the door of the marital chamber. There are men who can't walk upstairs as though to do so were an affair of ordinary life. They perform the task as though they walked upstairs once in three years. It is to be presumed that such men always sleep on the ground floor, though where they find their bedrooms it is hard to say. Mr. Juniper was admitted by Sophie, who stepped out as he went in. "Well, old fellow; B. and S. and plenty of it. That's the ticket, eh?"

"I did have a little headache this morning. I think it was the cigars."

"Very like;—and the stuff as washed 'em down. You haven't got any more of the same, have you?"

"I'm uncommonly sorry," said the sick man, rising up on his elbow in the bed, "but I'm afraid there is not. To tell the truth, I had the deuce of a job to get this from the old woman."

"It don't matter," said the impassive Mr. Juniper; "only I have been down among the 'orses at the yard till my throat is full of dust. So your lady has been and seen her brother."

"Yes; she's done that."

"Well."

"He ain't altogether a bad 'un;—ain't old Grey. Of course he's an attorney."

"I never think much of them chaps."

"There's good and bad, Juniper. No doubt my brother-in-law has made a little money."

"A pot of it;—if all they say's true."

"But all they say ain't true. All they say never is true."

"I suppose he's got something."

"Yes, he's got something."

"And how is it to be?"

"He's given the girl four hundred pounds on the nail"—upon this Mr. Juniper turned up his nose—"and fifty pounds for her wedding-clothes."

"He'd better let me have that."

"Girls think so much of it." Mr. Juniper only shook his head. "And, upon my word, it's more than she had a right to expect."

"It ain't what she had a right to expect, but I"—here Mr. Carroll shook his head—"I said five hundred pounds out, and I means to hold by it. That's about it. If he wants to get the girl married, why—he must open his pocket. It isn't very much that I'm asking. I'm that sort of fellow, that if I didn't want it, I'd take her without a shilling."

"But you are that sort of fellow that always does want it."

"I wants it now. It's better to speak out,—ain't it? I must have the five hundred pounds before I put my neck into the noose, and there must be no paring off for petticoats and pelisses."

"And Mr. Grey says that he must make enquiries into character," said Carroll.

"Into what?"

"Into character. He isn't going to give his money without knowing something about the man."

"I'm all straight at Newmarket. I ain't going to stand any enquiries into me, you know. I can stand enquiries better than some people. He's got a partner named Barry;—ain't he?"

"There is such a gentleman. I don't know much about the business ways of my respected brother-in-law. Mr. Barry is, I believe, a good sort of man."

"It's he as is acting for Captain Scarborough?"

"Is it now? It may be for anything I know."

Then there came a long conversation, during which Mr. Juniper told some details of his former life, and expressed himself very freely upon certain points. It appeared that in the event of Mr. Scarborough having died, as was expected in the course of the early summer, and of Captain Scarborough succeeding to the property in the accustomed manner, Mr. Juniper would have been one of those who would have come forward with a small claim upon the estate. He had lent, he said, a certain sum of money to help the captain in his embarrassment, and expected

to get it back again. Now, latterly enquiries had been made very disagreeable in their nature to Mr. Juniper; but Mr. Juniper, seeing how the land lay,—to use his own phrase,—consented only to accept so much as he had advanced. "It don't make much difference to me," he had said. "Let me have the three hundred and fifty pounds which the captain got in hard money." Then the enquiries were made by Mr. Barry,—that very Mr. Barry to whom the subsequent enquiries were committed,—and Mr. Barry could not satisfy himself as to the three hundred and fifty pounds which the captain was said to have got in hard money. There had been words spoken which seemed, to Mr. Juniper, to make it very inexpedient, and we may say very unfair, that these further enquiries into his character as a husband should be entrusted to the same person. He regarded Mr. Barry as an enemy to the human race, from whom, in the general confusion of things, no plunder was to be extracted. Mr. Barry had asked for the cheque by which the three hundred and fifty pounds had been paid to Captain Scarborough in hard cash. There had been no cheque, Mr. Juniper had said. Such a small sum as that had been paid in notes at Newmarket. He said that he could not, or rather that he would not, produce any evidence as to the money. Mr. Barry had suggested that even so small a sum as three hundred and fifty pounds could not have come and could not have gone without leaving some trace. Mr. Juniper very indignantly had referred to an acknowledgment on a bill-stamp for six hundred pounds which he had filled in, and which the captain had undoubtedly signed. "It's not worth the paper it's written on," Mr. Barry had said.

"We'll see about that," said Mr. Juniper. "As soon as the breath is out of the old squire's body, we'll see whether his son is to repudiate his debts in that way. Ain't that the captain's signature?" and he slapped the bill with his hand.

The old ceremony was gone through of explaining that the captain had no right to a shilling of the property. It had become an old ceremony now. "Mr. Augustus Scarborough is going to pay out of his own good will only those sums of the advance of which he has indisputable testimony."

"Ain't he my testimony of this?" said Mr. Juniper.

"This bill is for six hundred pounds."

"In course it is."

"Why don't you say you advanced him five hundred and fifty pounds instead of three hundred and fifty pounds?"

"Because I didn't."

"Why do you say three hundred and fifty pounds instead of one hundred and fifty pounds?"

"Because I did."

"Then we have only your bare word. We are not going to pay anyone a shilling on such testimony." Then Mr. Juniper had sworn an awful oath that he would have every man bearing the name of Scarborough hanged. But Mr. Barry's firm did not care much for any law proceedings which might be taken by Mr. Juniper alone. No law proceedings would be taken. The sum to be regained would not be worth the while of any lawyer to ensure the hopeless expense of fighting such a battle. It would be shown in court on Mr. Barry's side, that the existing owner of the estate, out of his own generosity, had repaid all sums of money as to which evidence existed that they had been advanced to the unfortunate illegitimate captain. They would appear with clean hands; but poor Mr. Juniper would receive the sympathy of none. Of this Mr. Juniper had by degrees become aware, and was already looking on his claim on the Scarborough property as lost. And now, on this other little affair of his, on this matrimonial venture, it was very hard that enquiries as to his character should be referred to the same Mr. Barry.

"I'm d—— if I stand it," he said, thumping his fist down on Mr. Carroll's bed on which he was sitting.

"It isn't any of my doing. I'm on the square with you."

"I don't know so much about that."

"What have I done? Didn't I send her to the girl's uncle, and didn't she get from him a very liberal promise?"

"Promises! Why didn't he stomp up the rhino? What's the good of promises? There's as much to do about a beggarly five hundred pounds as though it were fifty thousand pounds. Enquiries! Of course he knew very well what that meant. It's a most ungentlemanlike thing for one gentleman to take upon himself to make enquiries about another. He is not the girl's father. What right has he to make enquiries?"

"I didn't put it into his head," said Carroll, almost sobbing.

"He must be a low-bred pettifogging lawyer."

"He is a lawyer," said Carroll, on whose mind the memory of the great benefit he had received had made some impression. "I have admitted that."

"Psha!"

"But I don't think he's pettifogging; not Mr. Grey. Four hundred pounds down, with fifty pounds for dress, and the same or most the same to all the girls, isn't pettifogging. If you ever comes to have a family, Juniper——"

"I ain't in the way."

"But when you are, and there comes six of 'em, you won't find an uncle pettifogging when he speaks out like Mr. Grey."

The conversation was carried on for some time further, and then Mr. Juniper left the house without again visiting the ladies. His last word was that if enquiries were made into him, they might all go to—Bath! If the money were forthcoming, they would know where to find him,—but it must be five hundred pounds "square," with no parings made from it on behalf of petticoats and pelisses. With this last word, Mr. Juniper stamped down the stairs and out of the house.

"He's a brute after all," said Sophie.

"No; he isn't. What do you know about brutes? Of course a gentleman has to make the best fight he can for his money." This was what Amelia said at the moment; but in the seclusion of their own room, she wept bitterly. "Why didn't he come in to see me and just give me one word? I hadn't done anything amiss. It wasn't my fault if Uncle John is stingy."

"And he isn't so very stingy after all," said Sophie.

"Of course papa hasn't got anything, and wouldn't have anything, though you were to pour golden rivers into his lap."

"There are worse than papa," said Sophie.

"But he knows all that, and that our uncle isn't any more than an uncle. And why should he be so particular just about a hundred pounds? I do think gentlemen are the meanest creatures when they are looking after money. Ladies ain't half so bad. He'd no business to expect five hundred pounds all out."

This was very melancholy, and the house was kept in a state of silent sorrow for four or five days,—till the result of the enquiries had come. Then there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. Mr. Barry came to Bolsover Terrace to communicate the result of the enquiry, and was shut up for

half an hour with poor Mrs. Carroll. He was afraid that he could not recommend the match. "Oh, I'm sorry for that—very sorry," said Mrs. Carroll. "The young lady will be—disappointed." And her handkerchief went up to her eyes. Then there was silence for awhile, till she asked why an opinion so strongly condemnatory had been expressed.

"The gentleman, ma'am,—is not what a gentleman should be. You may take my word for that. I must ask you not to repeat what I say to him."

"Oh dear no."

"But perhaps the least said the soonest mended. He is not what a gentleman should be."

"You mean a—fine gentleman."

"He is not what a man should be. I cannot say more than that. It would not be for the young lady's happiness that she should select such a partner for her life."

"She is very much attached to him."

"I am sorry that it should be so. But it will be better that she should—live it down. At any rate I am bound to communicate to you Mr. Grey's decision. Though he does not at all mean to withhold his bounty in regard to any other proposed marriage, he cannot bring himself to pay money to Mr. Juniper."

"Nothing at all?" asked Mrs. Carroll.

"He will make no payment that will go into the pocket of Mr. Juniper."

Then Mr. Barry went, and there was weeping and wailing in the house in Bolsover Terrace. So cruel an uncle as Mr. Grey had never been heard of in history, or even in romance. "I know it's that old cat, Dolly," said Amelia. "Because she hasn't managed to get a husband for herself, she doesn't want any one else to get one."

"My poor child," said Mr. Carroll, in a maudlin condition, "I pity thee from the bottom of my heart."

"I wish that Mr. Barry may be made to marry a hideous old maid past forty," said Georgina.

"I shouldn't care what they said, but would take him straight off," said Sophie.

Upon this Mrs. Carroll shook her head. "I don't suppose that he is quite all that he ought to be."

"Who is, I should like to know?" said Amelia.

"But my brother has to give his money according to his judgment." As she said this the poor woman thought of those other five who in process of time might become

claimants. But here the whole family attacked her, and almost drove her to confess that her brother was a stingy old curmudgeon.

GRIS LAPIN.

A STORY.

HERE is a little break in the forest, an opening that seems to have been cleared by wood-cutters or charcoal-burners, but so long ago that it is now covered with a thick carpet of ivy and moss, upon which are heaped the dead leaves of yester-year. All is wonderfully still and silent in the wistful expectant silence of early spring-time, though sometimes you may faintly hear the far-off music of the hounds. And thus far we have followed the hunt, but some solitary old villain of a boar has carried the pack, as if on a bee-line, right over the hills and far away, and there they may stay for us, while, seated on a fallen tree-trunk, we enjoy the perfume of a pipe and the fresh and fitful breeze. It is early March, and the trees are still almost bare, but thickening with coming buds, so that the masses of the forest assume a misty softness. Faintly you may hear the sweet trill of larks high above the distant plain that shows like a cloud through the haze of twigs and branches, while the river winding through shows here and there a reach in silvery brightness.

Close by runs a hollow way all overgrown with trees and brushwood, and just at its verge, and on the edge of the clearing, stands the socket of an ancient cross, of the shaft of which some shattered fragments lie half concealed in the forest growth.

Then suddenly the stillness of the forest is broken by a great rustling and breaking of branches. Is it our friend the wild pig, who has doubled round upon us? Click! go the hammers of the gun, when a smothered voice exclaims, "Don't fire, monsieur; it is only I," as a huge animated bundle of dead wood comes crashing into the clearing. Beneath this great faggot is an old fellow in blue cotton blouse and overalls, with enormous sabots on his feet—sabots lined with a wisp of straw to make all snug and comfortable.

It is Toupet, the barber of the village down below—the superannuated barber, be it understood, for Toupet the younger now wields the razor and scissors, and rules the shop and café under the striped pole and dangling brass basin emblematic of the craft. But old Toupet is still hale

and vigorous. You may see him beside a huge pile of refuse tan, executing wild gambadoes in his wooden shoes—not in mere lightness of heart, though that is not lacking either, but in the way of making round cakes for burning, which he will presently stack on wooden shelves all round his little cottage. And then he scours the forests to gather the dead wood with his wooden hook, like a nutting-stick, that he now trails behind him, and his serpe, or bill-hook, carefully concealed, for that is a little against the law. Then he has his little garden on the hill-side, which furnishes the greater part of his diet.

He is a cheery and chirpy old soul, this Toupet, and when he had placed his big faggot carefully against the trunk of a tree, and wiped his brows with the sleeve of his tattered blue blouse, he came forward with quite the air of a marquis, and offered his little snuff-box with a gracious bow. Yes, he will gladly take a little taste of cognac if monsieur will also partake; and we chink together our drinking receptacles with great cordiality. He has much to say about the "chasse," with fervent hopes that the hunters will make an end of the whole race of savage animals, which are so harmful to agriculture and destructive to the humble kitchen-garden. And then I interrupted his recital of the damage done by the wild animals of the forest by asking if he knew anything about the old stone-cross.

At once Père Toupet's face assumed an expression of reserve and mystery. As for the cross—well, it had been there as long as he could remember; a relic of the old times, no doubt. But for him the stone had a more vivid interest. It marked the grave of a friend. It was not a thing to be talked about; but as monsieur was not of this country, and did not gossip, it could do no harm to tell him the story of Gris Lapin.

"They called him Gris Lapin because of his beard, which was thick and grey—pardon, monsieur, a rabbit has not a beard, I allow, but enfin, perhaps his prominent teeth—and did monsieur notice the prominent teeth of M. de Blenville, the master of the hounds? But nobody called him Lapin—and yet, if titles were hereditary—however, you shall hear. He was not of this country, the Gris Lapin, but from Brittany, and was once valet de chiens to the Comte de Blenville—with his hounds and his other distinctions. The count cut up all his estate, and presently

the château was in the hands of the notary, to be sold, and the count in hiding, nobody knew where. As for Gris Lapin, he would not take another place; he loved his freedom, and to live after his own pleasure, and he set up as a wood-cutter, a business at which he was very expert—too expert, perhaps, for the forest-keepers, who suspected him of felling more wood than he paid for, but for a long time they could prove nothing against him.

"At this time, he would often come to my little café, and we became great friends, and he would tell me of all his affairs. Of his wife, whom he had left behind in Brittany, and who was housekeeper to a rich lady there, of a family, it is said, who made their money out of sardines; and of his boy, the little Eustase. As for his wife, he was quite content she should stay in Brittany, but he loved his boy, and would take sudden journeys just to get a look at him. And somewhere in those parts lived the count's sister, who was married to some gentleman of the country, and she had taken charge of the little Mdlle. Agnès, the count's only child, for he had been married, but had lost his wife long ago. And so the Gris Lapin, when he went to see his own boy, would also pay a visit to the little daughter of his old master. The count's sister, being of the old noblesse, had but little to say to the rich people of the sardines. But she was well content, when her brother had eaten up all his estate, to arrange a marriage between him and the rich demoiselle of the sardines.

"It was Gris Lapin who brought us the news of all this, and soon we heard how the château was to be newly furnished and furnished up, and the count's old debts paid off; and presently we hear of nothing but M. de Blenville and Madame la Comtesse. And the new housekeeper at the château was no other than the wife of Gris Lapin; and their son, the little Eustase, was running about the place, a fine playfellow for Mdlle. Agnès, who had now come back to her father's house. But this did not last long. The newly-married wife took a violent dislike to her step-daughter—being a jealous ill-tempered woman, as was natural in one from her country. And so the demoiselle was sent to a convent to be educated, with the promise that she should become a sister when she was old enough to take the vows. And you may think

that mademoiselle, who was very lively and amiable, did not like the prospect, nor her father any more, who in his way was very fond of his daughter. But what was he to do? He could not give her a dowry, for everything was in the hands of his wife, and madame would give nothing, except for the convent.

"As for the little Eustase, he went to school in the town, with the frères, and soon he learnt all they could teach him; even the Latin, which madame would have him learn. And then said madame to her faithful Bretonne, 'Ma mie, I will make the future of your son. He shall go to the seminary and be a priest, and I promise you that he shall not want for friends, and you may look to see him a bishop before you die.' The mother was charmed with the notion, but as for Gris Lapin—for they were obliged to ask his consent—he did not care that his son should efface himself thus. 'If you will send him to college,' he said, 'let it be the military school, and make a soldier of him.' But madame would do nothing except in her own way. 'Eustase must be a priest, or she would have nothing more to say to him.'

"And Gris Lapin had not prospered, for if he made money quickly he spent it all in drink, and would work no more till it was all gone. And then he was noted as a poacher. If there were a hare within a dozen miles he would snare her. He cleared the streams of their trout, the fields of the quail and partridge. As for me, I am a little of a naturalist; and if he found anything strange in bird or fish he would bring it to me—and thus we became great friends and comrades. And sometimes I had it in my power to do him a good turn. You know the little garden that I bought with my savings. The soil is good, but the forest is too near, and the deer and the sanglier like nothing better than my young cabbages and lettuces. And I had built myself a little hut, where I might lie at night and watch for the animals, I and my little dog. And while I was clearing the ground, I came upon a little cave, hollowed out of the chalk, which proved very handy, for I could keep a cask of cider there unknown to anybody, and more than once Gris Lapin had been glad to hide himself there when the gendarmes had run him close.

"But you may judge that this was not a very reputable father for young Eustase, always so well cared for and proper. And

when our little monsieur came back from his college, with his long frock and his demure face like an abbé, I could have laughed to see the two together. But he was always kind and respectful to his father; for he had a heart of gold, that little Eustase, and I thought it a thousand pities it should be shut up in a cassock.

"Now, as ill luck would have it, when Eustase came home for his vacation, madame had gone to her own estate in Brittany, and the count had taken the opportunity to bring home his daughter from the convent to give her pleasure, and our young monsieur must needs become enamoured of this Mlle. Agnès; for her father, thinking him already just as good as a priest, saw no harm in these two old play-fellows being together; and perhaps they opened their hearts to each other and discovered how sad their lives would be without love. By-and-by, madame comes home in a hurry and makes a fine disturbance, and our young monsieur is sent back to his seminary and mademoiselle to her convent.

"And then came the war, and those miserable Prussians burst upon us. Then there were holidays at all the schools and convents, and mademoiselle was sent back post haste to the château, but a little moment too late, for madame had fled to England the day before. As for monsieur, he had joined the army; for he was a brave man, and had served already. But before the day had closed of mademoiselle's arrival, the Prussians were upon us in force. There seemed to be no end of them as they marched past, square and solid, and soon they were swarming everywhere. The general, who was some prince I was told, took up his quarters at the château, and there was not a householder who was free from these profitless guests.

"Meantime how fares our Gris Lapin? Why, as bravely as possible. He has the forest to himself; the keepers have all taken flight—they are no more gendarmes—and he at work with his hatchet, and selling wood to the Prussians as fast as you please—wood that costs him nothing but the pains of felling. 'But, my brave,' I say to him, 'you will pay for this afterwards, when the forest inspector comes back and takes note of all the wood you have cut.' 'But who will tell of me?' asked Gris Lapin fiercely. 'Depend upon it,' I said, 'that some of these keepers are still prowling about in disguise.' 'Let me catch them,' cried Gris Lapin savagely. There were others to warn him—his wife.

for example, who never saw him without giving him bad words; and even Mdlle. Agnès, who loved him better than he deserved, would put her pretty little hands together and implore him to have no dealings with the Prussians. 'But their money is good; it sounds well,' he would cry, chinking the coins in his pocket. And, *ma foi*, perhaps he had reason in that. For, look you, it was a good time also for the *cafés*, and I took more money in a week while the Prussians were with us than in a month at other times. There were three or four of these soldiers staying in my house—honest fellows enough, who made themselves useful about the place, with a heap of their comrades to smoke, drink, and sing all day long in my little *café*.

"And one day in the thick of it all, when you could hardly see across the room for smoke, a man came in dressed as a peasant in his blouse and gaiters, with his bill-hook hanging at his girdle—an honest woodman as it would seem. Some of the soldiers laughed and made faces at him, and called him *Herr Crapaud*. But he did not seem to mind. A quiet middle-aged man, with rather prominent front teeth, who reminded me in some way of *Gris Lapin*, only for the beard which was wanting; and as he paid me for his *café*, he contrived to give me a pressure of the hand and a look of intelligence, as much as to say, 'I want to speak to you.' 'You want your hair cut, *monsieur*,' I replied to his look in a loud voice. 'Good; will you walk into the *salon*?' and he followed me from the *café* into my little shop. The door between was wide open, and I did not venture to shut it lest suspicion should arise, and I began snipping away, calling out loudly at times to my son and daughter-in-law, who had taken my place in the *café*. All the while he talked to me in a low voice, and I replied in the same manner. In the meantime I had noticed that his hair was made up to look grey, and that his skin was smooth and fine—a young man in the disguise of an old one—so that I was not too much surprised when he whispered: 'I am *Eustase*. Find some way to get me into the *château*.' After all, I was not too well pleased with the business he wanted me to undertake. Why did not he go to his father, who was on the best terms with all the officers at the *château*? 'I passed by his hut,' said the young man, hanging his head, 'but my father was not fit.' I understood perfectly with-

out more words. Our *Gris Lapin* was *Lapin Gris*. Drunk, intoxicated, alcoholised—don't you understand, *monsieur*? It was his habit when he had earned a little more than usual, and naturally the young man was ashamed.

"'But come,' I cried, recollecting myself and speaking out loudly so that all might hear—'yes, if you have pigeons to sell, you will find a market for them at the *château*.' For it occurred to me that some one from the *château* had been enquiring if I had any pigeons to sell, having a *dovecote* in my *grenier*. And the young man gave me a startled look, but presently took my cue and we began gabbling about pigeons like two half-crazed amateurs. And the big soldiers raised a laugh at us, shouting out, "*Pigeon—crapaud*," all together with their thick voices, in the middle of which I called to *M. Eustase* to follow me to my *grenier*, where I would show him pigeons to be astonished at. And no sooner were we alone together—'*Père Toupet*,' cried *Eustase*, 'you made a dangerously good shot with your pigeons. Look!' and he drew forth from inside his blouse a beautiful white carrier of the *Antwerp* breed. 'And now,' he cried, 'tell me about the *château*—is she safe? is she well—*Mdlle. Agnès*? and he blushed like a young girl.

"Well, I had heard no ill news of *mademoiselle*, who lived in a corner of the *château* with *la mère Bretonne*. But had he come into all this danger to seek news of *mademoiselle*? Well, no; he had great affairs on hand, but he must find his way to the *château* without creating suspicion, and he looked to his old friend *Toupet* to help, as well for "*la patrie*" as for his own sake. It was not for *Toupet* to resist such a claim as that. But what better could be done than to start *M. Eustase* for the *château* with a basket and two pairs of fine young pigeons that I had intended for the New Year's fête?

"We knew little of what was going on at the time; but we heard all about the affair afterwards—how *Eustase* at the beginning of the war had cast aside the costume of a seminarist and joined the army as a volunteer, and he contrived so as to join the regiment of which his patron had been made colonel—this was under *De Palladines*, an old friend of *M. le Comte*—and managed so well that before long, thanks to his colonel, he was drawn from the ranks and received his *épaulette* as *sous-lieutenant*.

And then there was fought a great battle, in which the Prussians got the worst of it, and it only remained for the army to march on and put the enemy all to flight. That was what the comte urged upon them; but the generals doubted that the Prussians were too strongly posted. And then the comte proposed to send a faithful scout who would mark the strength and position of the enemy; and he thought of Eustase and sent for him, offering that he should have his epaulettes if he succeeded; while, if he were discovered, he might make up his mind to a bullet through his head, or perhaps to be hung up to the nearest tree. And Eustase said that he would go; and he was taken to the general, and he shook him by the hand and promised him the cross as well as his epaulettes if he succeeded in his mission. And they gave him three carrier-pigeons which had been trained at the farm where the general's quarters were, and would find their way home if it were from Paris. And the count would have him put on the cassock of a priest, but Eustase said no, he would never wear the cassock again, but instead he would be a honest woodman, like his father.

"Well, Eustase knew the country, every inch of it, and made his way from forest to forest, and under his blouse the three white pigeons, and at each post he counted heads and made his calculations. One—two of the pigeons were cast loose and made their way like arrows back to the camp, but the third he kept till he should reach head-quarters and find out the full state of the whole army-corps.

"You may fancy what joy there was at the château when la mère and the pretty Agnès found out who was the elderly pigeon merchant who had brought the birds for the prince's kitchen. And with all the loving messages from the count to his daughter, that Eustase took care should not lose in the telling; and, best of all, that in four-and-twenty hours, if all went well, the count himself, at the head of his braves, would be among them. And, by good luck, la Bretonne herself could tell her son everything about the army, for she had listened and kept watch all the time, and that most of the regiments had been sent off towards Paris, and it only remained for our men to fall on and win a splendid victory. And Eustase put all this in his despatch, which he placed in a quill and attached to the pigeon; and they let fly the pigeon from the very

terrace of the château; and it circled high in the air and then flew away in the right direction just over the forest.

"And now," said Eustase proudly, looking into the dark eyes of Agnes, 'I have won my epaulettes, I have won my cross, and perhaps I have won my mistress.'

"And just then they heard a shot which made them all tremble.

"It was that same afternoon that I had a visit from Gris Lapin which a little surprised me, for from what his son had said I did not expect that he would be in a reasonable state that day. But he was quite himself and in high spirits. 'You were quite right, old friend,' he cried, 'in the warning you gave me about the forest keepers. I have had one of those animals spying about me to-day, but I think I have settled his business.' I must tell you that ever since my visit from Eustase those drolls of Germans had never ceased to make sport of me, coo-cooing like pigeons and croaking like frogs, though what there was to make fun of I never could make out. And when the Gris Lapin came into the café the chorus began again; and he looked around angrily, thinking there was some insult intended to himself; but I pacified him by telling him how it was my pigeons they were joking about. And I drew him into the little shop and whispered to him the news of his son, how he was an officer now, and likely to have the cross. But Gris Lapin would hardly believe me, and when he was convinced of the truth, 'Now,' said he, 'let me once see my son in his epaulettes, with the cross upon his breast, and I will never appear again to be a trouble and disgrace to him.' And as we were talking together in a low voice we heard the sound of a military party, tramp, tramp, tramp; and behold, there came along, at the double, an armed guard of Prussians, with a prisoner in the middle of them, his hands tied behind him, as pale as death, with a strange glazed look in the eyes. 'Ah,' cried my son, who had also run to the door to look, 'that is a poor fellow whom they have caught sending messages to our army by a carrier-pigeon, Heaven bless him.' And at that Gris Lapin staggered forward and threw himself among the soldiers with a loud cry, while the prisoner turned his head. 'Mon père,' he cried, springing towards him as well as he could, but the soldiers urged him along with their bayonets, and drove away Gris Lapin with blows, and he fell backwards among us more dead than alive.

"I well remember that night, when just as darkness was coming on, two women passed along the street closely veiled, and in the deepest black. And all the world had a sad heart, for the poor young man we had known from a child was to be shot at daybreak next morning, and it was mademoiselle and la Bretonne who were going to take a last farewell. And we heard that they had been ordered to leave the château before midnight, for that the prince was terribly incensed at them for having given information to poor Eustase. They were to leave the château, and be sent out of the Prussian lines, and Gris Lapin was to take charge of them to make their way out of the country as they best could. And people were looking everywhere for him, but he could not be found. He had hidden himself perhaps, so that none might see him in his misery. But in the course of the evening I heard somebody tapping at the door and opened, and there was Gris Lapin, very much changed in appearance, and quite white and haggard, and I began to bewail his son, and to try to comfort him, and he bade me hold my tongue, for that I knew nothing about the matter. 'That might be,' I said, 'but I knew this much: that if I knew the traitor who had betrayed him, I would do my best to strangle him with these two hands of mine.' At this, Gris Lapin dashed at me, tearing the wrapper from his brawny throat. 'Do you say so? Then strangle me, for I am the traitor!'

"I would not believe him till he told me the sad story. How he had been lying half-asleep in his hut, when a man came up to the place and peered about all round as if he were taking note of everything: the trees that were cut, the stacks of wood and all; and some evil spirit put it into his head that this was his old enemy, the forest keeper, who had come back to plague him, and he followed the man at a distance and he watched him into the town, and again, when he left in the direction of the château. And he watched the château from his hiding-place in the woods. And when he saw the man come out and let fly the pigeon, he raised his gun and shot it. And he took the pigeon to the Prussians and sold it for fifty francs, with the little burden it carried. 'Yes; I have sold my son's life,' he groaned.

"For myself, I was frightened, overpowered; the thing seemed too horrible. I had not a word to say to my old comrade as he sat there in the darkness.

I felt that the man was accursed. He was the first to break silence. 'Well, I am going away—I am going to take charge of mademoiselle and my wife. They need never know,' looking at me fiercely. 'No,' I said, 'they need never know—nor anybody else, for that matter. I should not betray you.' 'You will not betray me,' repeated Gris Lapin; 'but you will not touch hands upon that.' 'No,' I said, drawing back, 'I will not.' At that his mood changed, and he flung himself into the operating chair, and bade me light my lamp and shave his beard. In a new country he would be a new man.

"And indeed he looked a new man with his grey beard taken off and his hair shortened. A much younger man, for his hair was still black, or only speckled with grey. When I had finished he muffled up his face, saying, with a bitter laugh, that it would not do to take a chill. 'And now,' he said, 'I am promised ten minutes with my son. It will be a pleasant interview, don't you think?' with a hollow laugh that made my blood run cold; 'and before daylight to-morrow,' he continued, 'I shall be far away from here, and we shall never meet again. Will you not touch hands?' 'My friend,' I said, 'may Heaven forgive you, but I cannot take your hand,' and Gris Lapin turned away and was lost to sight in the darkness.

"I slept soundly enough that night, for whatever people's troubles may be one must work, and work brings the need of repose; but just before daybreak I was aroused by the soldiers who were billeted upon me turning out. I got up to see what was the matter, when a sergeant, catching sight of me, made signs to me in a rough authoritative way to take up a spade and follow him. I turned sick at what was going to happen, but these were people not to be trifled with, and I marched away to the forest with the rest.

"It was in this little clearing, monsieur, where the firing-party was drawn up, with one solitary figure stripped to his shirt standing before them. I flung myself down on the ground and buried my face in the moss, and then the volley rang out loud and clear. And then the firing-party marched off, and I was left with the sergeant, who was carelessly pacing up and down, and who motioned to me to dig the grave. But first I went up to the body to close the eyes that were staring wildly, with, I fancy, some little consciousness still left in them. But the face

was quite different from what I expected. With the marks of my own razor upon it, and a gash that I made in my agitation the night before! It was the face of Gris Lapin. Ah, how I pressed his hand, and I fancied that the numbed fingers feebly returned the pressure. His crime was expiated, he might rest in peace. And, *ma foi*, I should like to lie here myself with the sound of the axe in the distance and the wood-pigeons cooing. But that is all folly, for when we are dead, what matters?

"Mind, I do not believe for a moment that the young man thought that he had left his father to die. He could not think it possible that they would shoot one man for another. Nor would they have done so but for the ruse of Gris Lapin in having his well-known beard taken off. But, any how, the young man escaped, and the guard did not recognise the change. And perhaps he does not know to this day, for when the war was over none could say what had become of Gris Lapin. And I also held my peace, for I thought that such would be the wish of my old comrade.

"But M. Eustase got his epaulettes after all, and in the end the comte gave his permission that he should marry *Mdlle. Agnès*. And madame, who was at first very angry, was afterwards reconciled, and when she died—both she and the comte are now dead—she left the bulk of her fortune to the young couple. And so the little Eustase is now M. de Blenville, and hunts the forest like a grand seigneur, but some of us remember that, after all, he is the son of Gris Lapin."

MARRIAGE BY CAPTURE.

WHEN an Eskimo youth has killed a polar-bear unaided, and so proved himself capable of providing for the wants of a family, he is sent forth at night to obtain a wife, by seizing the first girl he can surprise unawares. She screams, of course, bringing out the whole village population, and, an appreciative audience secured, sets upon her captor with tooth and nail, releases herself from his clutches, and darts among the crowd. He follows, pushing aside the old women who attempt to bar his progress, heedless of the seal-skin scourges they lay about his shoulders. Should he catch the flying lass, more scratching and biting ensues, and, perchance, a second escape. The chase is then renewed as before.

only the wife-hunter is inspirited by knowing that, a third capture effected, there will be no more maidenly struggles; the girl accepting her fate, and allowing him to lead her away amid the applauding shouts of the excited spectators. The aboriginal Australian adopts a more summary process when tired of single blessedness. He looks about for a likely help-mate, and finding one, waits his opportunity, knocks her down, and carries her home.

Marriage by capture, in this simple form, is now unknown out of Savagedom, having elsewhere resolved itself into bride-chases and sham bridal-battles; mere mockeries or mimicries of the grim realities of those ancient days, when men literally took wives unto themselves, in practical assertion that "none but the brave deserve the fair."

In Singapore the winning of a bride depends upon the matrimonial aspirant's fleetness of foot, or skill in paddling his own canoe. In the first case, a circular course is marked out, half of which is traversed by the maiden—encumbered only with a waist-band—ere the word is given for the would-be possessor to go in pursuit, in the hope of overtaking her before she has thrice compassed the circle; that achieved, she has no choice but to take the victor for her lord. In the water-chase, the damsel takes her place in a canoe, and plies its double-bladed paddle until she has obtained a reasonable start, when her admirer sets off after her. The contest is usually but of short endurance, the pair having come to a proper understanding beforehand; but should the girl have no fancy for the suitor, and possess sufficient determination and strength of arm to gain the goal first, she is at liberty to laugh at the disconsolate loser of the match, and reserve herself for a claimant more to her liking.

Bride-chasing is generally a trial of horsemanship. In this shape it is practised by most of the nomadic tribes of Central Asia. Captain Burnaby tells us that when it has to be decided how a Turcoman belle is to be settled in life, "The whole tribe turns out, and the young lady, being allowed the choice of horses, gallops away from her suitors. They follow her. She avoids those she dislikes, and seeks to throw herself in the way of the object of her affections. The moment she is caught she becomes the wife of her captor. Further ceremonies are dispensed with, and he takes her to his tent." In some tribes the girl is burdened with the carcass of a goat or lamb, which must be snatched from her

lap. The Hazarehs mark out a course some twelve miles long and three wide. As soon as the maiden has got far enough from the crowd to be able to guide her steed with perfect freedom, she turns round, stretches out her hands to the waiting horsemen, and her father gives them the signal to go in pursuit. The chase is sometimes a long-lasting one. A traveller records one, in which, after two hours' galloping, the field of nine had dwindled to four. Racing neck and neck together the riders gradually gained on the quarry, each shouting in turn, "I come, my Peri! I am your lover!" One of the horses suddenly faltered in his stride, and the dismayed girl saw that the man of her heart was out of the hunt. Making a quick turn, she darted right across the path of the exultant three, and made at full speed for her lover. The baffled suitors checked their headlong career with one accord, but, coming into collision, two of them rolled over on the plain; and, eluding the remaining detrimental's grasp with a triumphant laugh, the maiden reached her lover's side. In a moment his arm was round her waist, and she was his own.

Among the Kalmucks the bride-race is reduced to a match, and Dr. Clarke avers that the girls are such good horsewomen, that for one to be caught against her will was a thing unknown. Kalmucks of high degree, however, do not run their brides down; they bargain for them, and the bargain concluded, the bridegroom and the chief men of his horde ride to the camp of the bride's people, who feign opposition to the match, and only surrender the lady after a mock conflict. Sometimes the conflict is real enough. If a Kalmuck swain cannot find the wherewithal to satisfy the demands of his lady-love's parents, or is for any other reason obnoxious to them, he enlists the aid of his kinsmen, who at the earliest chance swoop down on the adverse camp, and, providing they do not get the worst of the fight, carry the prize of their valour to the expectant lover's arms.

In Circassia, the carrying off of the bride is a pre-arranged affair, the bridegroom and his followers rushing into the bride's house while the wedding revelries are at their height there, and bearing the unreluctant damsel off with them. Against such an irruption the Indian Mussulman provides by closing the entrances to the lady's abode, and setting a guard before it, to receive the expected assailants. "Who

are you, who dare to obstruct the king's cavalcade!" demands the leader of the wife-seeking band. "There are thieves abroad at night, possibly we behold them," is the reply. A long interchange of uncomplimentary badinage ensues, terminating in an attempt to break through the ranks of the bride's defenders. Failing in this, the bridegroom pays down a certain sum of money, and the gates are flung open. There is a second contest of strength within the gates, ending, as a matter of course, in the giving up of the maiden, and her departure with the victorious party.

The Khords have turned marriage by capture from comedy into farce. Riding one night among the hills, an English officer heard loud cries, seemingly proceeding from a village hard by. Making for the spot, he saw a man carrying upon his back something enveloped in scarlet cloth. He was surrounded by twenty or thirty young fellows, who had all their work to do to protect him from the desperate assaults of a number of girls. The man had just been married, and was conveying his blooming bride home; and not until he was within the boundaries of his own cottage did his fair pursuers cease hurling stones at him, as he and they ran their hardest.

The mock-battle forms part of the marriage ceremonials of the Kookies dwelling on the north-east frontiers of India; but with them the bride's party has the best of the bout. After the purchase-money agreed upon has been paid down, the friends of the bride-buyer essay to fetch his bargain, and get well thrashed for their pains; but the hurly-burly over, the woman is brought out, conducted to the cottage-gate, and then given up without any more ado. Among the Garrows of Bengal, the respective positions of the parties to the marriage are reversed. It is the gentleman's part to affect unwillingness to enter the bonds of matrimony; it is for the lady to do the courting. When she has brought her wooing to its hoped-for end, she fixes the day, and bids her friends come and make merry with her. The feast finished, the guests bear the hostess to the river and give her a bath. Then a move is made for the happy man. Seeing the advancing procession, he pretends to hide, but soon suffers himself to be caught, carried to the water, and well dipped therein. The parents, setting up a dismal bawling, rescue him from his captors, and loudly declare they will not part with their beloved son. There is a

scramble, and they are overcome; a cock and hen are sacrificed, and the pair are man and wife.

So late as the seventeenth century it was customary in some parts of Ireland for the bridegroom's friends to receive those of the bride with a shower of darts, carefully directed so as to fall harmless; and Lord Kaimes, who died in 1782, deposes that the marriage observances of the Welsh of the day were significantly symbolical of marriage by capture; the respective friends of bride and groom meeting on horseback, the former refusing to deliver the lady on demand, and bringing about a sham conflict; during which the nearest kinsman of the bride, behind whom she is mounted, galloped away, to be pursued by the opposite party until men and horses had had enough of it, when the bridegroom was permitted to overtake the pretended fugitive and bear her off in triumph.

The Berricors of France are the only European people among whom the form of capture still survives. Upon the day of a wedding the doors of a bride's house are closed and barricaded, the windows barred, and her friends mustered within. Presently the bridegroom's party comes, asking admission on one false pretence after another. Finding speech of no avail they endeavour to force an entrance, with no better fortune. Then comes a parley; the besiegers proclaim that they bring the lady a husband, and are admitted within doors, to fight for the possession of the heart, win it, and the bride with it; the couple being forthwith united in the orthodox fashion.

WAITING.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

CHAPTER I. TEN YEARS AFTER.

THREE lusty children were playing at "hide-and-seek" behind the clipped trees and hedges of Trevden Hill, up and down the terrace walk and the stone steps. They could not have had a better place to play in, and it was invariably regarded as a special treat by the younger members of the Northlington family, to be allowed to shout and romp to their heart's content in Uncle George's garden, undisturbed by nurse's warning that they would wake the baby, or papa's scolding, if by any chance they made too much noise for poor mamma's head.

This afternoon they had received an invitation to tea. Aunt Dora had walked over with them, and was sitting in front of

the house, at the present moment openly aiding and abetting little Fanny in her efforts to find such a good hiding-place, that the boys would never guess where she was.

"Not there, Fan; that will never do," she said, as Fanny, the roundest and plumpest of maidens, tried to squeeze herself behind the large stone ball that stood at the top of the steps. "Steph will find you directly. Go behind the summer-house, and give a good 'Whoop!' they will hear the echo, and won't know where to look for you."

Fanny ran off, with her pretty yellow curls floating behind, quite confident that aunty knew best, though somewhat reluctant to give up her chosen hiding-place.

Dora watched her till she disappeared behind a yew hedge, then the smile that had lighted up her face died away, she rested her head on her hands, and looked out beyond the cedar into the blue distance.

A fair sweet face it was still, though the long years of waiting had left their stamp, and given an anxious careworn expression to the sensitive mouth; but the turn of the head and the grey eyes were the same. What one missed was the hopefulness and gaiety of youth. Her dress was simplicity itself—a figured print, dark in colour, without ribbon or lace.

Even Fanny had (many years ago) given up as worse than useless all attempt to make Dora look like other people.

"I don't go out much," Dora had said on one occasion, "and I want to save what I can. We shall want it some day."

Fanny had shrugged her pretty shoulders, as she invariably did at any reference to Walter Dalton, and was silent—that is to say, silent for the moment—but she afterwards broke out to Stephen, with aggravated resentment, against the absent hero.

How long was this to last? Was sweet loving Dora to waste her whole life in waiting for a man who would never be able to earn a home for her? "She sends him every sixpence she can save, I know she does," continued the indignant little woman. "Why, only the other day she would not accept an invitation to the vicarage—and she likes going there, you know—because Steph had upset the cream-jug over her dress, and she said she could not afford a new one till the autumn! She is wasting her life; and as for him, he deserves that she should give him up, and that is what I should have done in her place ages ago."

But it was all to no purpose. Dora could not forget or break her promise; she still wrote to Walter long loving letters, and every year she sent him her photograph, wondering sadly as she did so when the long term of waiting would come to an end.

"Poor Walter! he will send for me when he can."

His letters, though not very regular, were full of his unchanging affection and devotion; only nothing prospered with him. The mining speculation smashed up almost immediately. Since then he had tried half-a-dozen other schemes, each one apparently more ruinous than the last; and the home of which he had talked in Sunset Corner seemed farther off than ever.

Nevertheless Dora's life at The Chestnuts was not an unhappy one; she had plenty to do, for Fanny did not grow more energetic with increasing years, and Stephen still turned to his sister for advice and help in all matters of importance. Then there were two little nieces now to teach and pet in addition to Stephen and Edward.

People had almost forgotten the story of Miss Northlington's engagement, and had left off wondering why she had set her heart upon such a reckless match—that is to say, people who were not intimate enough with the family to know the whole truth.

It was a useful busy life this of Dora's, but sometimes she was very tired.

This bright afternoon, when the children were at play, as she sat listening to the sighing of the wind in the cedar, with her hands clasped tightly together, and her head bent down, the yearning to see Walter once again was strong in her, and her attitude was so sorrowful that it made George Wyatt's heart ache, as he came towards her along the terraca. She never heard him till he was quite close, and then she started, and looked up with a smile of welcome.

"Are you tired, Dora?" he asked gently.

"No, not tired, only thinking. Do come and talk to me, Mr. Wyatt."

"Were they very sad thoughts, my dear? I'm afraid we don't any of us think enough of your troubles."

Heaven knows there was no need for him to reproach himself with a want of sympathy. He took her hand and sat down by her side.

"We are such old friends, are we not? that it will be quite safe for you to tell me what you are thinking about."

"Mr. Wyatt, I would rather tell you

than the others, because—because"—she looked at him wistfully—"I think you will understand me better. I have not had a letter from Walter for a great many mails, and it is a long time since he went. I do not think I can go on like this much longer. He is so afraid of making me poor, so afraid I sha'n't like living out there. I know so well how he feels about it, my poor Walter! so I have written to say that I am coming out as soon as possible. I have saved a little money—just a little—and we shall have something to start with. I hope he will be glad that I have decided it, and"—her voice sank almost to a whisper—"I cannot bear to be parted from him any longer. I have tried to be patient—indeed I have."

George Wyatt's ruddy face grew pale, and the hand that rested on the iron table trembled, but Dora was looking far away beyond the garden-wall, and she did not notice him. She was thinking of Walter and his farewell words, "Promise that you will never give me up;" it seemed to her that she heard his passionate voice, and saw his loving eyes fixed upon her. Promise? Aye, she would keep her word, come what would.

"Have you quite made up your mind to this step?"

It was one of George Wyatt's peculiarities, that whenever he was most moved, he was apt to express himself in stiff trite sentences.

"Yes. I have quite made up my mind, and I am going to ask you to tell Stephen and Fanny. I always come to you in my difficulties, don't I?"

"I have been able to do very little for you, my dear;" this with a suppressed sigh.

Dora put her hand on his for a moment, and then went on:

"Stephen and Fanny are very good to me, but it has not been very comfortable at home just lately. I could not do as they wished about Mr. Keith—I dare say Steph told you—and it is better that I should go at once, and not put it off any longer."

George Wyatt drew a deep line in the gravel walk with his stick.

"I do not consider that your refusing Mr. Keith ought to make any difference in your home-life. Stephen does not intend that."

"I'm sure he doesn't, dear Stephen, but he is so disappointed, and I can't prevent him from begging me to break off my engagement."

"Supposing that there happened to be some one else who was anxious, very anxious to make you happy; some one who would take you abroad or stay at home; in fact devote his life to your happiness, would you still feel yourself bound to—forgive me, Dora—to that childish contract?"

Dora looked at him.

"Do you mean somebody besides Mr. Keith?" she asked in surprise.

"Yes."

"I should be very, very sorry. I hope it's a mistake of yours," replied Dora; she was entirely unsuspicious of the truth. "I think it must be." George dug his stick still deeper into the path. "But if it is not," continued Dora, "that is only one more reason why I had better go away at once. And oh, Mr. Wyatt, I do love Walter!"

He believed it; at one time he had tried hard to persuade himself that these years of neglect had weakened Dora's affection for Walter Dalton; he knew now that the Dora of to-day was unchanged in her constancy.

"My dear child, I quite believe you," he said, "and I will tell Stephen your decision, as you wish. We shall have to see about making arrangements for your journey. But here come the children!"

"Aunt Dora," shouted Stephen, rushing up the steps three at a time, "that was a splendid place for Fan to hide in, if she hadn't looked out, like a little muff, and Edward hadn't seen a bit of her hat. Hallo, aunty! what's the matter? Have you been crying? You look so queer."

"Do I, Steph? I haven't been crying."

"It's Uncle George who looks queer," said the more observant Fanny. "Are you going indoors, Uncle George? May I come too?"

George held out his hand, and Fanny trotted off by his side.

"Do grown-up gentlemen ever cry?"

"Sometimes, Fan."

"Oh!" After a pause, "I hope you never will."

Mr. Wyatt did not answer; as he opened the dining-room door, Fanny peeped in, and, catching sight of the table which was being laid for tea, she forgot her abstract speculations, and burst forth into entreaties, might they have tea in the garden? It would be such much better fun.

"Will Aunt Dora allow you to?"

"Aunt Dora always likes everything that is nice; but I'll run and ask her."

In after years, Fanny remembered that tea-party in the Trevden garden; how happy they all were (but not quite so noisy as usual, even the boys being subdued); how, after tea was over, and Fanny had poured it out herself, Uncle George had told them stories of what he did when he was a little boy; and how Aunt Dora, with a red shawl round her (Uncle George had fetched it from the house) had walked up and down the terrace watching the sunset. When Fanny had gone to ask her if she wasn't tired, she had started and turned red, and Fanny had seen the light in her eyes and the pink colour in her cheeks, and for the first time in her short life it had dawned upon her that something strange was going to happen, and that it was something that made Aunt Dora look very happy.

"I wash my hands of the whole affair, from beginning to end, so there is an end of it," said Stephen to George Wyatt. "Dora is one of those people who, when they have once got an idea into their heads, stick to it through thick and thin. It's a great pity, but, as Fanny says, it is her own doing, and she must abide by the consequences. Why couldn't she have married Keith? As nice a man as ever stepped, with a comfortable income, and desperately in love with her. And I even thought, years ago, you know, Wyatt, that you and she might have made a happy couple. She would make any man an excellent wife, as Fanny says; and I'm sure I don't know how we shall get on without her. But I always objected to this mad affair from the very beginning, mind you, and it is not likely that I am going to change my opinion like a weather-cock, just to please a silly girl's fancy, who doesn't know her own mind two days together! No, I wash my hands of the whole affair."

Thus it fell out that it was George Wyatt who volunteered to make the necessary enquiries about steamers, who had an interview with the captain, and who superintended all the final arrangements for Dora's comfort during her voyage.

Very quickly the last few weeks slipped by, and then there came the last day—the last hour in England. The final wrench was over, the farewells had been said to Fanny and the children, to Stephen, who still refused to sanction his sister's departure. It was a cold September day, and the clouds were flying quickly across the sky, white-crested waves were heaving the waters of the Mersey; the river

looked grey; the long lines of docks, the thousands of masts, the vast quays and warehouses were all unbrightened by a gleam of sunshine. The deck of the ship was clearing slowly, and in little groups the friends of the passengers were saying good-bye and going on shore; a small crowd of spectators was lounging about at the entrance of the dock. Two or three children, having already made themselves quite at home in their new quarters, were racing up and down the cabin-stairs, or staring at each fresh arrival.

Up and down the stone quay walked Dora and George Wyatt, from the sheds where the porters were pushing and rolling great crates and unwieldy tubs, to the iron crane that stretched far up into the grey sky, and creaked and moaned in the wind. All around them, the roaring of steam, the shouts of the sailors, and the bustle of departure.

"I think you must go on board, Dora."

The last messages had been given, the last directions about letters and writing. Even till this moment there had been a faint hope in George's mind that her courage might fail her—that she might possibly be detained. What would his return home be like? He must go back to his work and his daily life, but he felt now, more vividly than he had ever done before, what her loss would be to him. Tears stood in his eyes as he looked for the last time on the sweet face of the woman for whose sake he would gladly have died, and as he looked—was it his fancy, or had happiness really brought back Dora's youth and freshness?—it seemed to him that the long years were as nothing, and that he was still taking care of the little school-girl who had got a holiday at last, and was escaping from all her troubles.

"By your leave, sir," said a man with a truck, who had brushed roughly against Dora.

"This will never do. Well, my dear, there's everything comfortable for you now, I hope, and I trust you will have a prosperous voyage, and don't quite forget us all when you get to Lima."

His voice faltered; and now in her new joy, and her certainty that her own trials had come to an end, for the first time it flashed upon Dora that she had underrated his affection and loyalty, that here was a pearl of great price which she had put aside without giving it a second

thought; but the idea vanished almost immediately, as he answered her whispered "Forgive me, I have not been grateful enough for all your goodness to me," with "My dearest child, such old friends as we are don't want to talk about such a thing as gratitude; we understand one another. Come, they will let me stay on board till the bell rings; I must see the last of you."

Silently Dora put her arm in his, and in the bustle and noise of the steamer they separated.

"You are quite content and satisfied?" were his last words as he kissed her forehead.

"More than content. I am doing what I have longed to do ever since Walter left me."

"Heaven bless and keep you, my child!"

He was the last to go on shore, and while the ship steamed slowly towards the sea, he stood watching, watching till he could no longer distinguish Dora from the other passengers; and till the last curl of smoke faded from his sight.

CHAPTER II.

THE long voyage was a prosperous one. Among the passengers was a young German lady, going out to Lima with her little girl, to join her husband.

Dora, who was a wretched sailor, had become seriously ill soon after they left Liverpool, and Frau von Hagedorn had proved a most affectionate and untiring nurse. The two ladies had become great friends in consequence, as people do on board ship, unless they are so unfortunate as to fall into the opposite extreme, and become bitter enemies. They had spent a few days together at Buenos Ayres, that fair city of gardens and fountains, and were again together on board the steamer Amazon, steaming southwards towards the Straits of Magellan.

As they neared the snowy peaks and glaciers that border the entrance to the Straits, the weather became unsettled, and for several days the mists and rain-storms had prevented the ladies from being on deck as much as usual. One morning, however, Dora had gone up the cabin stairs with little Sophie von Hagedorn, in hopes of getting a glimpse of the beautiful scenery through which they were passing.

"What a dear sun to shine for us! See, tante, she is looking out," exclaimed Sophie in her broken English, clinging tight to Dora's hand.

She had long since appropriated "Tante Dora" as her own especial companion and friend, ever since the day when she had discovered that the strange English lady with the kind eyes loved all little children, and had only just said good-bye to her own niece, who was about Sophie's age, and also had yellow hair and red cheeks, and who (extraordinary to say) had likewise a great taste for listening to Aunt Dora's stories.

The mist was indeed rising fast, and the curiously-shaped mountains were illuminated with rays of sunshine, casting red and golden lights on the snowy peaks, while, far below, the rich vegetation grew close to the water's edge.

"It is beautiful," said Dora, as she stood leaning against the bulwarks. In her blue dress and hood, with the tiny maiden by her side, she made a charming picture.

Three gentlemen, who were taking their morning's constitutional—an hour's walk from stern to prow of the vessel—passed close by. They bowed, and continued their walk.

"That girl makes a perfect slave of herself to the child," remarked a young Englishman, who would willingly have thrown away his cigar and deserted his friends if he had seen an opportunity of addressing Dora.

"It is a nice little maiden," replied his companion, a kind-featured middle-aged man, with a strong German accent; "and the young lady herself also pleases me. I sit next to her at dinner."

"Just like your luck. That ought to have been my seat."

"It would have done you no avail, my friend. She has thoughts for no one, and is very reserved, as your fair countrywomen are; so, at least, the Frau von Hagedorn is telling me, when I ask who is the pretty Engländerin."

"She is going on to Lima," observed the third, as he sheltered himself behind the German, in order to light a fusee, "and I only hope she'll like the country when she gets there. Horrid hole! I suppose she's got a heap of money, or her people have been lucky. Lima has never done me any good, and I've been broiling there, off and on, these ten years, thanks to those infernal mines."

"Don't you think mamma would like to come up and get a little fresh air, Sophie?" asked Dora. "Run down and give her my love, and say I will wait for her. I see my

deck-chair, so I can sit and rest if I get tired."

With a parting hug, Sophie obeyed, and Dora was left to amuse herself as best she might. To her English eyes, the fast-changing scenery was an unceasing amusement.

As the sun grew hotter and stronger, the mist faded away, and revealed the beauties of the strange country.

By-and-by several ladies came up, and Dora was beginning to think that she would go herself and find Frau von Hagedorn, when a familiar name fell upon her ears as the three smokers passed close to her again.

They spoke to the ladies, and finally the captain joined the group and an animated conversation commenced.

Mr. Richards, the dark-haired man with the grievance, appeared to be the chief speaker, and he frequently appealed to the captain to confirm his statements.

The captain, having been for many years on the line, would naturally know a thing or two about Callao and its immediate neighbourhood. One story in particular Mr. Richards related with the most minute details—people will be amused at anything on board ship—about an unfortunate Englishman, a clever fellow too, who had been out in Peru more than ten years, and everything that he had put his hand to had failed, and he was no fool; he only just managed to live and keep his family, though he had help from his friends at home.

All this Dora heard, heard in a dreamy way without listening, as they passed and repassed the spot where she sat. She had taken Walter's last letter from her pocket-book, and was reading it again as if she did not already know it by heart. The time was getting short now. How soon she would see him again—dear Walter! Henceforward, please Heaven, she would devote her life to smoothing away all difficulties from his path, and to making his home in Lima a brighter one than it had been so far.

"In reference to your companion in Peru," suggested the German with the kind face, "the fault would be with the young man himself, without doubt."

"Certainly it was—a regular ne'er-do-weel," replied the captain. "I ought to know, as he married my cousin, and though I never set eyes on the man, I have heard a great deal about him. His wife doesn't ask people to the house much—ashamed of him, I suppose, poor thing!"

There was a murmur of sympathy from the ladies.

"The accounts don't tally," observed the Englishman who had bemoaned his place at dinner. "Here's Richards collecting our sympathies on behalf of an unfortunate genius whom he reveres or—beg pardon, Richards—did love as a brother once upon a time; and the captain comes with a dash of cold water and says it is his own fault. I don't believe it's the same man—the contrast's too striking."

"It must be," said the captain briefly, as if the subject was not a pleasant one. "Richards mentioned his name at the beginning of the story, or I should not have interrupted him."

"What is his name?" asked one of the ladies.

The waves lapped ceaselessly against the sides of the ship; the group of passengers sauntering up and down continued to talk and laugh; the tints on the glacier changed from rose-pink to gold; but Dora heard and saw no more till Sophie slipped her fat little hand into hers.

"Mamma is very sorry, she cannot come up now, but she will in the afternoon. She hopes it will not be too windy for you. Tante Dora," as Dora turned towards her with white face and lips, "are you weary of waiting?"

"Yes," said Dora, and she wrapped the shawl round her; "and I am very cold."

"Poor tante!" said the child tenderly. "Come, and I will help you down the stairs. Mamma will make you warm in the cabin. Come!"

The Amazon made a successful passage through the Straits, and entered on the broad waters of the Pacific. The storms and mists were left farther behind day by day; the sun grew fiercer and fiercer. The passengers began to talk of the end of the voyage, and to lay bets as to when they should first sight land.

There was one among them who had no plans and no longings for the journey's end. Tenderly as she was nursed and cared for by Frau von Hagedorn and the ship's doctor, it became evident that the English lady who had taken such a fancy to the little German girl would never live to reach Lima.

Everything was done for her that kindness and skill could devise. The captain himself carried her on deck on the days when she was strong enough to bear it.

There was not a sailor on board who failed to ask, day by day, "How is Miss Northlington this morning?"

She was fading away from their grasp, and it seemed that she had neither the will nor the power to rally her strength.

It was too hot for Dora to be carried on deck as usual, the port-hole and the cabin-door was wide open to admit what little breeze there was. She was dressed and sitting up; she had asked for her desk, and was arranging letters, and tearing up papers.

"You must go in to dinner to-day," she said, looking up cheerfully as the bell rang. "I have got everything I want. Please go!" as she saw refusal in her friend's face.

"Then I will send the stewardess to sit with you, or will you have Sophie? She is longing to come and see you, she is just outside."

Dora smiled, and said that she would rather have her little favourite than any one else.

"Tante Dora," said the little girl as she crept into the cabin on tiptoe, "I have such pretty flowers. The cook gave them to me; he has a few—a very few. They grow in a pot. Look, this is a myrtle spray; will you have it?"

"Thank you, darling," she said, taking the tiny nosegay in her thin fingers, and fastening it to her dress; her beautiful eyes were fixed lovingly on the child. "How good of you to bring it to me! But you look very sleepy, Sophie."

"I am it also, Tântchen; may I say my English prayers to you now, instead of with mamma?"

"Please, Sophie."

The child knelt down and repeated the simple prayer that Dora had taught her, when they had first shared the same cabin. Then she began to say her hymn; towards the end she paused and hesitated, uncertain what came next.

"And in thy heart forgive him all," said Dora in a low clear voice, and Sophie repeated after her:

"And in thy heart forgive him all,
As thou would'st be forgiven. Amen."

"I think Tante Dora is almost as asleep as I am," whispered Sophie when her mother came back to the cabin; "say good-night to her if she wakes."

When the sun rose out of the blue Pacific waters Dora's spirit had passed away. George Wyatt's fancy had come true—though in a manner of which he

had never dreamt—the long school-time was over, her holidays had begun at last.

She died quite peacefully, without a sigh. Sophie's little spray of myrtle was still fastened to her dress. On the outside of an envelope they found a few words scribbled in pencil:

"My love to all at home. Tell Mr. Wyatt that I am very happy. My love to Walter."

She died three days before they sighted land. On the following morning, the tones of the tolling-bell were wafted far over the quiet sea, and the captain with faltering voice read the funeral service, while the crew stood round bare-headed, and Frau von Hagedorn knelt sobbing for the friend who, in these few weeks, had become so dear to her.

At Callao, shortly after the arrival of the Amazon, when the passengers were greeting their newly-found friends, and the decks were crowded with shouting sailors and pushing porters, a handsome dark-bearded man—to whom the white costume of the country was remarkably becoming—made his way on board. He enquired for Miss Northlington; her friends had commissioned him to meet her.

He heard the sad tidings of her death with deep concern; he had known her for many years, he said, the intelligence was most distressing to him, and would be to all interested in Miss Northlington. After a short interview with the captain, whom he discovered to be a connection of his own, Mr. Dalton begged to be introduced to the lady who had so befriended Miss Northlington during her illness.

Kind-hearted Frau von Hagedorn met him with outstretched hands, and poured into his sympathising ears the account of Dora's patience and goodness.

"I had grown to love and esteem her, Mr. Dalton, like my own sister, as I am sure all must who were with her. I miss her so that, though I shall meet my dear husband to-morrow, after two years' separation, I can think only of her; and my little daughter still weeps. Are you a married man, Mr. Dalton?"

"Yes, I have been married for nine years. My eldest girl is about the same age as yours."

"Ach! So then you have a heart and can feel for my poor Dora. And I think she had a trouble, though she liked not to talk of herself. Will you come to the cabin and see where she died?"

Mr. Dalton bowed his handsome head, and followed Frau von Hagedorn.

It was close and hot in the cabin. Mr. Dalton did not ask many questions; after examining their contents with deliberate care, he silently put his seal on Dora's desk and travelling-bag, and wrote instructions for their being returned to Mr. Stephen Northlington.

"And this," said Frau von Hagedorn, putting Dora's envelope into his hand, "I will send through the post, it will arrive sooner."

As his eyes fell on the uncertain writing he grew deadly pale (there are moments of retribution even in this life).

"You will do as you think best," he said; "will you pardon me if I bid you farewell? My nerves are hardly equal to this strain. I am completely upset."

He took Frau von Hagedorn's hand in his and pressed it. "What fine eyes he had, and what a noble countenance," thought the little German lady as she begged him to go up into the fresh air, "and so much sympathy—a true-hearted nature."

In the bustle and confusion of landing, the captain saw no more of Mr. Walter Dalton. When he came to make enquiries he found that the tall Englishman had gone away some hours ago, apparently overcome by the distressing information which he had received. He had left no address.

From that day to this neither Stephen Northlington nor George Wyatt have heard tidings of Walter Dalton. When Fanny (many weeks later on) unpacked Dora's travelling-bag, the little packet of bank-notes (that had been saved through ten long years of waiting) was missing.

George Wyatt visited the captain and the doctor of the Amazon on their return to England; he heard from their lips the story of Dora's illness and death. He knows, now that the first sharp grief is over, that it is better as it is. He still lives at Trevden Hill. He is still the friend and mainstay of the Northlington family—the children worship him. Little Fan believes that since Aunt Dora went away, there is no one so good as Uncle George in the whole wide world. Two or three times a year a fair-haired young nephew of George's—whom he has declared his heir—comes to Trevden Hill. George Wyatt has never married.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER I. THE BOY DAVEY.

At a date lying sixteen years back from the time of the Becklington bank robbery, a worthy couple named Robin had been engaged by Mr. Alison Stirling as porter and general servant, at the then newly-established bank.

The dual appointment was by no means a luxurious one, since the financial business itself was then in its infancy, and the success that began to attend it partook more of the fitful gleam of April sunshine than the steady radiance of June. Two small rooms at the back of the bank were apportioned to the man and wife: the little kitchen lighted by a window very high up, that looked plump against a dead wall and enjoyed an uninterrupted view of a leaden water-pipe and spout; the little bedroom lighted (which really seems somewhat an ironical term to apply to the process in question) only from the kitchen.

But Robin and his wife were well content. In eighteen hundred and twenty-two, working folk were less ambitious in their ideas than nowadays; and so it came about that the various friends of Dickory Robin and his wife Susan were of opinion that they had come in for what might be looked upon as a "snug thing," since two rooms, a pound a week, and firing, were not to be picked up every day of the week.

It has been said that Alison Stirling, the senior partner in Becklington Bank, was a just but hard man; selfish, yet righteously so (if such a thing can be), since he defrauded no man. He was not a man who had hardened with time; but had apparently been born so, like a loaf baked crusty from the first. He was as just, as unrelenting, as bound up in his own success and advantage in these earlier years as in those then still to come. He read the testimonials of Dickory Robin and Susan his wife, with a keen and scrutinising eye; he particularly laid stress upon one qualification impossible to be dispensed with—they were "without encumbrances." The worthy couple entered upon their functions, discharging them to the perfect satisfaction of all concerned. The Becklington Bank increased and multiplied its transactions, widened its connection, and became a thing known in the land. And so a year passed by.

Then a strange thing happened.

Two rough fellows tramping from one sea-coast town to another, found, lying in a corner of the road, a little baby, either dead or fast asleep.

One turned it over with his foot, at which it gave a little moan; the other raised it in his strong arms.

It was late, and time was an object. The men did not want to go wandering all over the country to find a poor-house. An official-looking building stood handy, and struck them as a likely place wherein to find sanctuary for their unwelcome prize; since, like the kind-hearted sailors they were, the thought of leaving poor baby on the hard bed in which they had found it, never occurred to them.

The men rang—timorously enough—at a lurking door down a stone-flagged passage, and Mrs. Robin, hastily wrapped in a shawl to conceal some slight sketchiness of attire, answered the summons in person.

"Here's a babby, missis; we found it lying by the road," said sailor number one, putting the unconscious infant into Mrs. Robin's astonished arms.

"We be seafarin' chaps on the road to our ship—we canna be hampered wi' a squaller," said his fellow.

There stood Mrs. Robin, instinctively clutching the baby, while the rushlight she had set on a shelf in the passage, flared dimly in the wind. As to the sailors, all that was left of them was the fast-dying sound of rapidly departing feet.

Mrs. Robin clutched the baby tighter, peered out into the darkness, saw nothing for her pains, and, being quite unable to close and bar the door burdened as she was, called upon Dickory to help her.

Susan huddled the little one under her shawl to avoid comment in the passage. Once in the nuptial chamber she closed the door—Dickory having followed her in—set her shoulder against it to bring it close, turned the key in the lock, and faced her husband.

"Dickory," she said, "here's a little new-born baby."

"The devil!" cried Dickory.

"More like a hangel," said his wife, kissing the child that lay motionless in her arms.

"Where did it come from?" said Dickory, who was great-hearted and honest, but slow of understanding.

"Some sailor-fellys found it lying by the roadside."

"What did they give it to thee for, Susie?"

"'Cause there wasn't no one else for to take it," said Susie.

The object of this discussion lay by this time on Mrs. Robin's knee, while Dickory bent his head the better to bring his observation to bear upon it.

It was very small and very young—a month at most. Its eyes were closed, its little lips apart like a breaking bud.

In Mrs. Robin's breast a mother's yearning grew as she looked upon the baby's face. Doubtless it was the child of sin and shame; doubtless some miserable woman had left it to the chance compassion of a world less cruel than her own cowardice.

What matter? The child was none the worse for that, was it? Putting this question to herself, she grew quite fierce.

That night the little waif slept in the curve of Susie's arm, sucking its own little thumb all night for want of something better. Not that baby went to bed hungry. Did not Dickory himself mix the warm milk and water for it, testing the temperature by the tip of his own big finger.

And so it came to be said that the boy Davey had been, in early life, paid into the bank as if he were money, and retained there ever since.

Yet he did not hold his own, and take firm root, without that struggle which generally precedes the attainment of any position of eminence.

For a time, the child was, as Dickory put it, "onnat'ral quiet, like as if he knew he were where he didn't ought to be." But the high spirits of extreme youth are not always to be kept down.

One day Alison Stirling espied a small person of the masculine gender beating on a tin canister with a stick, and evidently looking upon himself as a soldier of distinction. Another day he heard a heavy thud in the passage, and got there just in time to see the same small personage—apparently wounded in battle—borne off to distant regions in the arms of Mrs. Robin, with a bump the size of a pigeon's egg upon his youthful brow.

Mr. Alison Stirling spoke to Anthony Geddes, summoning that trusty servant of the house and firm to the sacred recesses of his private room for the purpose. Anthony appeared confused. As a matter of fact, he had had the young warrior into his room several times, and set to work to introduce him to the mysteries of the alphabet; a scholastic course readily entered into by Davey, since Mrs. Geddes

administered sweet cakes of carraway at intervals during the studies.

The senior partner intimated that he suspected an "encumbrance" had been added to the Robins' nest, a condition of things he looked upon as remarkable, to say the least of it, considering the mature years of the parent birds.

"It is, besides, an infringement of our agreement," said Mr. Stirling, folding his hands in his best manner, and bringing the finger-tips accurately together; "and I fear, Geddes, you have encouraged the thing."

Anthony looked the personification of guilt, and was about to stammer out some reply, when Mrs. Robin chanced to knock at the door, having carelessly left a broom in the master's room.

"Step in, my good woman," said Mr. Stirling; and Susan stepped in, feeling that her hour had come. "I have reason to think——" began the good man, and having got so far, it suddenly dawned upon him that the subject he was embarking upon was at once a difficult and delicate one.

Susan stood there, embracing her own elbows as if to hold herself together. She was pale, and trembled a good deal; but brave as a tigress called upon to defend its cub.

"If it's me and Dickory having kep' a hinfant as you're drivin' at, sir," she said pantingly, "I'm free to confess that things are so, as Mr. Geddes well knows, aving taught the dear child his A B C, till it's really quite surprisin' to 'ear 'im, and makes Dickory stare."

"Then the child is not your own?"

Mrs. Robin grew scarlet as to face, and more than ever breathless.

"I ast you, sir," she said, not without some symptoms of approaching tears, "is it likely at my time of life? The child's a fondling."

"Why did you keep the child?" her master said.

"We kep' it because there was no one else to kep' it, and because we took to it and it took to us—the blessed lamb!" replied the accused gulpingly.

"There is always the—poor-house," said Mr. Stirling, coughing.

"So there is, sir," said Mrs. Robin snappingly; "and a blessed refuge it dew seem from all one 'ears. Do you think, sir, as Dickory and me would let little Davey come to such a sorry pass as that?"

"David!" said Mr. Stirling, with a dignified ignoring of the abbreviation; "is that the child's name?"

Then he became catechetical, and asked :
 "Who gave it that name?"

"Dickory did, sir. He'd bin reading of King David a-dancin' before the Hark, and he thought he seemed a lively and cheerful sort of a pusson for to call a babby after, so we got it christened that way, sir."

"Anthony, Anthony," said Mr. Stirling gravely, shaking his head and looking reproachfully at the counsel for the defence; "this will never do, turning the bank into a foundling hospital. Why, it is a downright open encouragement of immorality and vice! We shall have the place inundated — inundated with deserted orphans."

Anthony stared up at the ceiling in a dazed and helpless fashion. He had heard of it "raining cats and dogs," but he had never heard of a shower of orphans. He felt that an apology was due to the house, that the firm had been deceived and generally upset, and yet——

His heart yearned over little Davey.

He had steered the boy through alphabetical shoals and quicksands up to the letter Q. He felt it would be a cruel thing to abandon him before the final Z was safely reached.

But he could read no clemency in the eye of the presiding judge. The sentence passed upon our first parents in the garden of Eden was about to be passed upon little Davey.

Mr. Stirling had cleared his throat preparatory to passing sentence (perhaps it stuck there on the way up); Mrs. Robin had clasped her elbows more firmly to give herself a stronger hold upon events; Anthony Geddes had drawn a long breath (as counsel may often be seen to do when they are getting the worst of it), when——

The room door was thrown open, impetuously, not respectfully, as became the portal of so dignified a precinct, and enter Geoffrey Stirling with little Davey perched upon his shoulder, firmly clutched by the legs and in a state of riotous delight. The merry ripple of a child's laugh sounded incongruously in that solemn council-chamber, and the senior partner may be forgiven for the frown that knitted his solemn brows. Even the consideration that banking hours were over could hardly show up Geoffrey's conduct in any other light than that of a misdemeanour.

But what a picture the two made! The man young, buoyant, full of life and light, his dark clustering locks grasped by the baby hand, and just above his own gracious

beaming face, the merry blue eyes and yellow curls of the happy child.

Writing the sad and sombre tale of Geoffrey Stirling's life, I love to see him, just this once, crossing the far-off disc of my story, a flash of light and colour, beautiful and bright; a man upon life's threshold only, knowing not what it had in store for him — trustful, hopeful, fancying that all things fair and sweet lay in the future, flowers to be culled by his hand and set like a posy in his breast — Geoffrey Stirling, before disappointment had soured or temptation assailed, when his eyes met all men's fearlessly, and he thought it a pleasant thing to look upon a child's guileless face and listen to a child's happy laughter — Geoffrey as we see him but this once, and shall see him never more!

"Really, Geoffrey," began Mr. Stirling, while Anthony shook in his old shoes, divided between adoration of Master Geoffrey and his "ways" and fear of the results of his imprudence, "this is most unseemly."

Geoffrey set the little fellow down (the child looked grave enough now), tossed back the locks from his brow, fixed a pair of dark, defiant, laughing eyes upon his uncle's judicial countenance, and said:

"Is it? Well, perhaps it is; but he's such a jolly little chap, and he lives in the bank. Don't you, my man? Deposit account—eh? One small boy, golden curls, blue eyes, and all the rest of it! What interest do you expect upon him, Susan?" At which Susan laughed and coloured, and said, "Well, now!" and blessed herself and the child, and was very happy indeed, consigning Mr. Alison to undignified oblivion.

Indeed, there was every reason to suppose that "Master Geoffrey" had been in the secret of Davey's existence in the bank settlements of the bank this ever so long. At all events, he distinctly winked at Anthony, which made that worthy man at once radiant and uncomfortable.

So Mr. Geoffrey had his way, and little Davey was not banished.

When, indeed, said Becklington, hearing the story—Heaven knows how!—did Mr. Geoffrey not have his way?

It was all very well for Alison Stirling to go in for being stern and implacable (no one doubted his capability in these respects. — Just try to overdraw your account, and then you'd see, or go to try and raise a sum on shaky or insufficient security!), but there was no doubt his heart showed one soft place, whereon was

written "Geoffrey." It therefore being Mr. Geoffrey's will that little Davey should not be regarded in the light of an "encumbrance," but stay on at the bank as a welcome inmate, he stayed.

True, the senior partner always made believe not to see him, never asked after him, and plainly showed that, having consented to his existence, he by no means felt bound to display either consciousness of or interest in the same.

But what cared Davey? He was happy with his adopted parents, rode miles and miles on Dickory's knee, and looked upon the circle of Susan's arms as an impregnable and sure refuge from all earthly ills. He grew familiar with Mrs. Geddes; on several occasions assisting at the chaste mysteries of her toilette, and watching with breathless delight the piling-up of the little heap of stiff curls that adorned either of her temples, while he regarded her best tea-green spencer (with the waist immediately under the arms) as a garment of unspeakable magnificence, suggestive of high-days and holidays, savoury cakes, and raspberry-vinegar.

He also wrestled with the residue of the alphabet, even to the final Z; and shortly after this achievement he began figures (always under Anthony's supervision), and quickly developed one of those wonderful aptitudes for arithmetic that seem almost like a sixth sense. The fame of his attainments spread.

"It's jest enoo' to raise t' yure on a mon's yed," said the worthies of The Safe Retreat; "'twas said the church schoolmaster had gone whoam an' banged his yed agen the waa' when he see'd the sums as Davey made no manner of account of."

If this shining talent that so drove the good dominee to desperation had been the only thing developed by Davey with the opening years, it had been well.

But we all know that mental, by no means always ensures physical perfection; and Susan began to perceive that her boy—every bit as dear as though he were in very truth her own—was what she called "a weakling."

Farmer Dale put it in plainer language.

"The boy Davey's not a crookback—but there's summaut wrong wi' Davey; summaut as 'ull never be put reet this soide of O-be-joyful-land, when happen the Lord 'ull see to t'."

That was just it. Davey wasn't a crookback, but he wasn't far from it. His head was set too low upon his shoulders; his

hands were too long and lanky; his large pale-blue eyes had a wistful look of suffering; there was more of patience in his face than ought to be seen in any young face, and his smile had no mirth in it and rarely climbed higher than his lips. "The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children." Somebody's sins—perhaps the father's, perhaps the poor unhappy mother's—were being visited on Davey.

Yet were his trials but as keys to open the hearts of those about him; for never yet was the bonniest child that ever stepped loved better than the "weakling" Davey.

When the lad was about seven years old, Dickory, then well on in years, fell sick of a pleurisy, and—despite all Dr. Turtle could do—died.

The child grieved—in a quite unchild-like way—for his old friend, wandering disconsolately up and down the stone-floored passages of the bank after business hours, and sitting by the fire in Dickory's empty chair of an evening, with an eerie look upon his wistful face, as though he were waiting and listening for a message from the dead.

Susan grew quite afraid of the little man when he thus sat opposite to her, silent and gazing into the glowing embers with that listening look upon his face.

"He's along wi' Dickory—that's what he is," she would say, speaking under her breath. "Eh, but they were a pair, were him and Dickory!"

It was the first experience in the child-life of a living familiar presence fading into an unbroken silence that made each day's routine a thing lacking something; and who knows what morbid dreamy fancies might have taken possession of his mind, but for a sudden freak on the part of the senior partner which changed all the current of his life.

"What has become of the encumbrance?" said Alison Stirling one night to Anthony, who started at the unlooked-for nature of the question.

"He's grown a great boy now, sir," said Anthony; "not very strong, but, dear me! with a wonderful head for figures."

"So I heard; so I heard. Such a gift, Anthony, is valuable in financial life. I propose to send the boy to school—in fact, to qualify him as a clerk in the bank."

So Davey went to school; on which occasion Mrs. Robin became a sort of Niobe in private life; but when she saw him come home ever so much stronger and more

boy-like than he had been before, and when she saw the copper-plate hand he wrote, she became reconciled to the decrees of fate, and wished that Dickory had lived to see that day. And all through the days of his childhood, and the days of his boyhood, the days of sorrow, and the days of his success, one star shone out for Davey brighter than all other; for over and over again did Susan tell him the story of how Alison Stirling wanted to have him sent to the poor-house, and how "Mr. Geoffrey" came in, brave, bright, and beautiful, bearing him on his shoulder; how he laughed and called him a "jolly little chap;" and had his "way"—as, indeed, was it likely now that anyone should have the heart to say him nay?

There was no story Davey loved so well; not even that of the boggart in the marshes, who milked all the cows on moonlight nights, and carried the milk away in a fairy-can, but was always clumsy and spilt some of it, and it turned to lovely snow-white flowers wherever it fell, so that the farmers knew which way the sly boggart had gone, but could never, never catch him.

That was a lovely story; yet not to compare to the one about Mr. Geoffrey! Davey could never see the boggart, but oftentimes he saw Mr. Geoffrey, and oh, how beautiful he was, and what gracious, gladsome ways he had with him!

It is to be feared that Davey was not half grateful enough to Mr. Alison for the education he had given him, and went on adoring Mr. Geoffrey just as he might look up to some bright star shining ever so far away in the deep-blue silent sky.

So passed the years away, slipping along like the beads through the hand that tells them, and Davey became a clerk in Beck-lington Bank.

By that time poor old Susan had grown infirm, and gone to live with a relative in the country, where it was the boy's pride and pleasure to walk out and visit her, always taking her some little thing or other bought out of his own "earned" money.

The dog Gaylad, who by that time was an institution at the bank, used to go with him; and if, in the course of one of these expeditions the pair chanced to meet Mr. Geoffrey, the lad would flush up high with pleasure and delight, and the dog wave his beautiful feathered tail, and raise his golden-brown eyes lovingly to his master's face, licking the hand that caressed

him; for Gaylad was Mr. Geoffrey's own dog, though he lived at the bank, where a watch-dog was considered a necessity.

Davey did not love Mr. Geoffrey the less because he was so changed since the old days when Dickory used to say it was "like sunshine" to catch a sight of him coming into the place; but the lad often wondered how it was his master now so seldom smiled, and never laughed the old merry ringing laugh that it did your heart good to hear. How could he read the story of a hasty passionate love—a bitter waking from the dream of a joy never to be? Such lore was a sealed book to Davey. But he could see how Mr. Geoffrey loved the child Ralph, and followed loving suit, spending hours of his evening leisure in carving exquisitely delicate models of ships for the little one, and then bearing these offerings of a reflected love to the White House, and there passing an hour that was something to think of all the rest of the week.

We have already seen Davey, breathless, and, according to general report, "wi' a face as white as milk," sent to warn Anthony Geddes on the morning the bank robbery was discovered.

A couple of hours later, when Geoffrey Stirling ventured to show himself to the people, all feeble as he was, at the open window, Davey was possessed by a sort of speechless frenzy, and, catching sight of a fist grasping a stone, made a convulsive spring forwards, and would have flung himself between that solitary figure at the window and the possible death that lurked below, but that Anthony held him in a grasp like a vice.

Those had been terrible days, but now their memory was growing dim.

For our story takes a leap of ten years, and in gathering up the rifted threads, we shall find things and people changed, some marvellously so, almost beyond the power of divination, and—among these last—the boy Davey and Mr. Geoffrey.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXVI. GURNEY AND MALCOLMSON'S.

IN Red Lion Square, on the first floor of a house which partakes of the general dinginess of the neighbourhood, there are two rooms which bear on the outside door the well-sounding names of Gurney and Malcolmson; and on the front door to the street are the names of Gurney and Malcolmson, showing that the business transacted by Messrs. Gurney and Malcolmson outweighs in importance any others conducted in the same house. In the first room, which is the smaller of the two occupied, sits usually a lad, who passes most of his time in making up and directing circulars, so that a stranger might be led to suppose that the business of Gurney and Malcolmson was of an extended nature. But on the occasion to which we are about to allude the door of the premises was closed and the boy was kept on the alert, posting, or perhaps delivering, the circulars which were continually issued. This was the place of business affected by Mr. Tyrrwhit, or at any rate one of them. Who were Gurney and Malcolmson it is not necessary that our chronicle should tell. No Gurney or no Malcolmson was then visible, and though a part of the business of the firm in which it is to be supposed that Gurney and Malcolmson were engaged, was greatly discussed, their name on the occasion was never mentioned.

A meeting had been called at which the presiding genius was Mr. Tyrrwhit. You might almost be led to believe that, from the manner in which he made himself at home, Mr. Tyrrwhit was Gurney and

Malcolmson. But there was another there who seemed to be almost as much at home as Mr. Tyrrwhit, and this was Mr. Samuel Hart, whom we last saw when he had unexpectedly made himself known to his friend the captain at Monaco. He had a good deal to say for himself, and as he sat during the meeting with his hat on, it is to be presumed that he was not in awe of his companions. Mr. Juniper also was there. He took a seat at one corner of the table, and did not say much. There was also a man who, in speaking of himself and his own affairs, always called himself Evans and Crooke. And there was one Spicer, who sat silent for the most part, and looked very fierce. In all matters, however, he appeared to agree with Mr. Tyrrwhit. He is specially named, as his interest in the matter discussed was large. There were three or four others, whose affairs were of less moment, though to them they were of intense interest. These gentlemen assembled were they who had advanced money to Captain Scarborough, and this was the meeting of the captain's creditors, at which they were to decide whether they would give up their bonds on payment of the sums they had actually advanced, or whether they would stand out till the old squire's death and then go to law with the owner of the estate.

At the moment at which we may be presumed to be introduced, Mr. Tyrrwhit had explained the matter in a nervous hesitating manner, but still in words sufficiently clear. "There's the money down now if you like to take it, and I'm for taking it." These were the words with which Mr. Tyrrwhit completed his address.

"Circumstances is different," said the man with his hat on.

"I don't know much about that, Mr. Hart," said Tyrrwhit.

"Circumstances is different. I can't 'elp whether you know it or not."

"How different?"

"They is different;—and that's all about it. It'll perhaps shuit you and them other shentlemen to take a pershentage."

"It won't suit Evans and Crooke," said the man who represented that firm.

"But perhaps Messrs. Evans and Crooke may be willing to save so much of their property," said Mr. Tyrrwhit.

"They'd like to have what's due to 'em."

"We should all like that," said Spicer, and he gnashed his teeth and shook his head.

"But we can't get it all," said Tyrrwhit.

"Speak for yourself, Mr. Tyrrwhit," said Hart. "I think I can get mine. This is the most almighty abandoned swindle I ever met in all my born days." The whole meeting, except Mr. Tyrrwhit, received this assertion with loudly expressed applause. "Such a blackguard, dirty, thieving job never was up before in my time. I don't know 'ow to talk of it in language as a man isn't ashamed to commit himself to. It's downright robbery."

"I say so too," said Evans and Crooke.

"By George!" continued Mr. Hart, "we come forward to 'elp a shentleman in his trouble and to wait for our moneys till the father is dead, and then when 'es 'ad our moneys the father turns round and says that 'is own son is a ——! Oh, it's too shocking! I 'aven't slept since I 'eard it, —not a regular night's rest. Now it's my belief the captain as no 'and in it."

Here Mr. Juniper scratched his head and looked doubtful, and one or two of the other silent gentlemen scratched their heads. Messrs. Evans and Crooke scratched his head. "It's a matter on which I would not like to give an opinion one way or the other," said Tyrrwhit.

"No more wouldn't I," said Spicer.

"Let every man speak as he finds," continued Hart. "That's my belief. I don't mind giving up a little of my claim, just a thousand or so, for ready cash. The old sinner ought to be dead and can't last long. My belief is when 'e's gone I'm so circumstanced I shall get the whole. Whether or no, I've gone in for 'elping the captain with all my savings and I mean to stick to them."

"And lose everything," said Tyrrwhit.

"Why don't we go and lug the old sinner into prison?" said Evans and Crooke.

"Certainly, that's the game," said Juniper, —and there was another loud acclamation of applause from the entire room.

"Gentlemen, you don't know what you're talking about; you don't indeed," said Tyrrwhit.

"I don't believe as we do," said Spicer.

"You can't touch the old gentleman. He owes you nothing, nor have you a scratch of his pen. How are you to lug an old gentleman to prison when he's lying there cut up by the doctors almost to nothing? I don't know that anybody can touch him. The captain perhaps might if the present story be false, and the younger son if the other be true. And then they'd have to prove it. Mr. Grey says that no one can touch him."

"He's in the swim as bad as any of 'em," said Evans and Crooke.

"Of course he is," said Hart. "But let everybody speak for himself. I've gone in to 'earn a 'eavy stake honestly."

"That's all right," said Evans and Crooke.

"And I mean to 'ave it or nothing. Now, Mr. Tyrrwhit, you know a piece of my mind. It's a biggish lot of money."

"We know what your claim is."

"But no man knows what the captain got, and I don't mean 'em to know."

"About fifteen thousand," came in a whisper from someone in the room.

"That's a lie," said Mr. Hart,—"so there's no getting out of that. If the shentleman will mind 'is own concerns I'll mind mine. Nobody knows,—barring the captain, and he like enough has forgot,—and nobody's going to know. What's written on these eight bits of paper everybody may know," and he pulled out of a large case or purse, which he carried in his breast coat-pocket, a fat sheaf of bills. "There are five thou' written on each of them, and for five thou' on each of them I means to stand out. 'It or miss. If any shentleman chooses to talk to me about ready money I'll take two thou' off. I like ready money as well as another."

"We can all say the same as that, Mr. Hart," said Tyrrwhit.

"No doubt. And if you think you can get it, I advise you to stick to it. If you thought you could get it, you would say the same. But I should like to get that old man's 'ead between my fists. Wouldn't I punch it! Thief! scoundrel! 'orrid old man! It ain't for myself that I'm speaking now, because I'm a going to get it. I think I'm a going to get it. It's for humanity at large. This kind of thing violates one's best feelings."

"'Ear; 'ear; 'ear," said one of the silent gentlemen.

"Them's the sentiments of Evans and Crooke," said the representative of the firm.

"They're all our sentiments in course," said Spicer; "but what's the use?"

"Not a ha'p'orth," said Mr. Tyrrwhit.

"Asking your pardon, Mr. Tyrrwhit," said Mr. Hart, "but as this is a meeting of creditors who 'ave a largish lot of money to deal with, I don't think they ought to part without expressing their opinions in the way of British commerce. I say crucifying 'd be too good for 'im."

"You can't get at him to crucify him."

"There's no knowing about that," said Mr. Hart.

"And now," said Mr. Tyrrwhit, drawing out his watch, "I expect Mr. Augustus Scarborough to call upon us."

"You can crucify him," said Evans and Crooke.

"It is the old man, and neither of the sons as have done it," said Hart.

"Mr. Scarborough," continued Tyrrwhit, "will be here, and will expect to learn whether we have accepted his offer. He will be accompanied by Mr. Barry. If one rejects all reject."

"Not at all," said Hart.

"He will not consent to pay anything unless he can make a clean hit of it. He is about to sacrifice a very large sum of money."

"Sacrifice!" said Juniper.

"Yes; sacrifice a very large sum of money. His father cannot pay it without his consent. The father may die any day, and then the money will belong altogether to the son. You have, none of you, any claim upon him. It is likely he may think you will have a claim on the estate,—not trusting his own father."

"I wouldn't trust him, not 'alf as far as I could see him, though he was twice my father." This again came from Mr. Hart.

"I want to explain to these gentlemen how the matter stands."

"They understand," said Hart.

"I'm for securing my own money. It's very hard—after all the risk. I quite agree with Mr. Hart in what he says about the squire. Such a piece of premeditated dishonesty for robbing gentlemen of their property I never before heard. It's awful!"

"'Orrid old man," said Mr. Hart.

"Just so. But half a loaf is better than no bread. Now here is a list, prepared in Mr. Grey's chambers."

"'E's another, nigh as 'orrid."

"On this list we're all down, with the sums he says we advanced. Are we to take them? If so we must sign our names, each to his own figure." Then he passed the list down the table.

The men there assembled all crowded to look at the list, and among others Mr. Juniper. He showed his anxiety by the eager way in which he nearly annihilated Messrs. Evans and Crooke, by leaning over him as he struggled to read the paper. "Your name ain't down at all," said Evans and Crooke. Then a tremendous oath, very bitter and very wicked, came from the mouth of Mr. Juniper, most unbecoming a young man engaged to marry a young lady. "I tell you it isn't here," said Evans and Crooke, trying to extricate himself.

"I shall know how to right myself," said Juniper with another oath. And he then walked out of the room.

"The captain, when he was drunk one night, got a couple of ponies from him. It wasn't a couple all out. And Juniper made him write his name for five hundred pounds. It was thought then that the squire 'd have been dead next day, and Juniper 'd 've got a good thing."

"I ate them ways," said Mr. Hart. "I never deal with a shentleman if he's, to say,—drunk. Of course it comes in my way, but I never does."

Now there was heard a sound of steps on the stairs, and Mr. Tyrrwhit rose from his chair so as to perform the duty of master of the ceremonies to the gentlemen who were expected. Augustus Scarborough entered the room followed by Mr. Barry. They were received with considerable respect, and seated on two chairs at Mr. Tyrrwhit's right hand. "Gentlemen, you most of you know these two gentlemen. They are Mr. Augustus Scarborough and Mr. Barry, junior partner in the firm of Messrs. Grey and Barry."

"We knows 'em," said Hart.

"My client has made a proposition to you," said Mr. Barry. "If you will give up your bonds against his brother, which are not worth the paper they are written on—"

"Gammon," said Mr. Hart.

"I will sign cheques paying to you the sums of money written on that list. But you must all agree to accept such sums in liquidation in full. I see you have not signed the paper yet. No time is to be lost. In fact you must sign it now, or my client will withdraw from his offer."

"Withdraw; will 'e?" said Hart. "Suppose we withdraw? 'O does your client think is the honestest man in this 'ere swim?"

Mr. Barry seemed somewhat abashed by this question. "It isn't necessary to go into that, Mr. Hart," said he.

Mr. Hart laughed long and loud, and all the gentlemen laughed. There was something to them extremely jocose in their occupying as it were the other side of the question, and appearing as the honest, injured party. They enjoyed it thoroughly, and Mr. Hart was disposed to make the most of it. "No; it ain't necessary; is it? There ain't no question of honesty to be asked in this 'ere business. We quite understand that."

Then up and spoke Augustus Scarborough. He rose on his legs, and the very fact of his doing so, quieted for a time the exuberant mirth of the party. "Gentlemen, Mr. Hart speaks to you of honesty. I am not going to boast of my own. I am here to consent to the expenditure of a very large sum of money, for which I am to get nothing, and which, if not paid to you, will all go into my own pocket. Unless you believed that you wouldn't be here to meet me."

"We don't believe nothing," said Hart.

"Mr. Hart, you should let Mr. Scarborough speak," said Tyrrwhit.

"Vell; let 'im speak. Vat's the odds?"

"I do not wish to delay you,—nor to delay myself," continued Augustus. "I can go,—and will go; at once. But I shall not come back. There is no good discussing this matter any longer."

"Oh no;—not the least. Ve don't like discussion; do ve, captain," said Mr. Hart. "But you ain't the captain; is you?"

"As there seems to be no intention of signing that document, I shall go," said Augustus. Then Mr. Tyrrwhit took the paper, and signed it on the first line with his own name at full length. He wrote his name to a very serious sum of money, but it was less than half what he and others had expected to receive when the sum was lent. Had that been realised there would have been no further need for the formalities of Gurney and Malcolmson, and that young lad must have found other work to do than the posting of circulars. The whole matter, however, had been much considered, and he signed the document. Mr. Hart's name came next, but he passed it on. "I ain't made up my mind yet.

Maybe I shall have to call on Mr. Barry. I ain't just consulted my partner." Then the document went down to Mr. Spicer, who signed it, grinning horribly; as did also Evans and Crooke and all the others. They did believe that was the only way in which they could get back the money they had advanced. It was a great misfortune; a serious blow. But in this way there was something short of ruin. They knew that Scarborough was about to pay the money so that he might escape a law-suit which might go against him; but then they also wished to avoid the necessity of bringing the law-suit. Looking at the matter all round we may say that the lawyers were the persons most aggrieved by what was done on that morning. They all signed it as they sat there,—except Mr. Hart, who passed it on, and still wore his hat.

"You won't agree, Mr. Hart!" said Tyrrwhit.

"Not yet I von't," said Hart, "I ain't thought it out. I ain't in the same boat with the rest. I'm not afraid of my money. I shall get that all right."

"Then I may as well go," said Augustus.

"Don't be in a hurry, Mr. Scarborough," said Tyrrwhit. "Things of this kind can't be done just in a moment." But Augustus explained that they must be done in a very few moments, if they were to be done at all. It was not his intention to sit there in Gurney and Malcolmson's office discussing the matter with Mr. Hart. Notice of his intention had been given and they might take his money or leave it.

"Just so, captain," said Mr. Hart. "Only I believe you ain't the captain. Where's the captain, now? I see him last at Monte Carlo, and he had won a pot of money. He was looking uncommon well after his little accident in the streets with young Annesley."

Mr. Tyrrwhit contrived to get all the others out of the room, he remaining there with Hart and Augustus Scarborough and Mr. Barry. And then Hart did sign the document with altered figures;—only that so much was added on to the sum which he agreed to accept, and a similar deduction made from that to which Mr. Tyrrwhit's name was signed. But this was not done without renewed expostulation from the latter gentleman. It was very hard, he said, that all the sacrifice should be made by him. He would be ruined, utterly ruined by the transaction. But he did sign for the altered sum, and Mr. Hart also signed the paper. "Now, Mr. Barry,

as the matter is completed, I think I will withdraw," said Augustus.

"It's five thousand pounds clean gone out of my pocket," said Hart, "and I was as sure of it as ever I was in my life. There was no better money than the captain's. Vell, vell! This world's a queer place." So saying, he followed Augustus and Mr. Barry out of the room, and left Mr. Tyrwhit alone in his misery.

TOM CORYAT AND HIS "CRUDITIES."

TOWARDS the close of the sixteenth century, there lived and wandered a crack-brained traveller named Thomas Coryat, of Odcombe, Somerset—which he calls his "dear natalitall place"—who appears to have been the butt of the wits and wittlings of his day. Even "rare Ben Jonson" condescended to write some coarse scurrilous verses in mock eulogy of his light-headed friend. The poor fellow seems to have been a fair Greek and Latin scholar, nor was he unversed in the French and Italian tongues, to which he subsequently added a colloquial mastery of Persian and Hindustani. For Tom Coryat, as his contemporaries loved to call him, roamed far and wide, visiting more towns and kingdoms than Ulysses, if, perchance, with less advantage to himself and others. At the same time, his descriptions of places are always instructive, and sometimes interesting, and would have been more so had he expressed himself in simpler language. An affectation of fine words and scholastic erudition was, however, the fashion of the day, so that our author's offence is merely one of exaggeration. Here and there we alight upon some curious observation, which not only evinces an intelligent curiosity on the part of the tourist, but which is worth remembering even in the present era of universal knowledge. Among the sights of Boulogne he mentions "a very high and strong watch-tower, built upon the toppe of an eminent hill, which our Englishmen do commonly call 'the old man of Boulogne.'" Its foundation was attributed to Julius Cæsar, instead of Caius Caligula, and on a clear day it was visible from Dover Castle. (It fell down in 1644, and the ruins are now known as the Tour d'Ordre.) On the road to Montreuil, he passed "a gallows, consisting of two goodly faire pillars of free stone, where there is no cross beame as upon our English gallows,

but that crosse beame is erected when any are hanged, and taken down againe immediately after the execution. No offendours are hanged there, but only fellons." A little further on he came upon a wooden structure, "at the toppe whereof there is a wheele, whereon the bodies of murderers only are tormented, and broken in peeces with certain yron instruments, wherewith they breake their armes first, then their legs and thighes, and after their breast. If they are favoured, their breast is first broken." About two miles from Montreuil, he was asked to contribute to the maintenance of the parish church, by "a Whitsuntide foole disguised like a foole, wearing a long coate, wherein there were many severall peeces of cloth of divers colours, at the corners whereof there hanged the tails of squirrels: he bestowed a little piece of plate, wherein was expressed the effigies of the Virgin Mary, upon every one that gave him money." That was in 1608, when religion was, after a fashion, more revered than it is in 1882. His hostess, for instance, implored the Virgin to bless him, until she discovered that he was a Protestant, when she gave him a look of pity.

Between Montreuil and Abbeville travellers had to traverse a goodly forest, forty miles in compass, infested with robbers and wild boars; and a few miles from Abbeville the symbol of civilisation reappeared in the form of "a stately gallows of foure very high pillars of free stone, which is joyned together with two crosse beames of stone, whereon the offendours are hanged." Monasteries in ruins, and deserted villages, bore terrible testimony to the devastation caused by the wars of religion under Henry the Third and Henry the Fourth. Pilgrims and friars, with a smattering of Latin, were at times overtaken, who helped to enliven the weariness of the journey. On approaching Paris, Coryat observed "seven faire pillars of free stone erected at equal distance from each other, betwixt St. Denis and Paris. In each of these is erected (query, engraven) the image of St. Denis, the Areopagite, in stone, with his two companions, Rusticus and Eucherius." According to the legend, St. Denis, after being beheaded in Montmartre, sauntered to a pretty village, where the cathedral now stands, with his head in his hand, resting seven times on the way.

Coryat is just a little severe in deriving the name of Lutetia from "lutum," "which signifieth durt, because many of

the streets are the dirtiest, and so consequently the most stinking of all that ever I saw in any citie in my life." The Exchange in Paris is described as a very poor affair, in no way comparable with the similar resort of the London merchants, "being a plaine pitched walke sub dio, that is under the open ayre." The garden of the Tuileries, though "much inferior to the king's garden at Fontaine Belean," is pronounced unsurpassed for "length of delectable walkes." It contained two walks, each seven hundred paces long, one of which was covered in with the branches of maple-trees. "This roofed walke hath six faire arbours, advanced to a great height like turrets. Also there is a long and spacious plot full of hearbes, and knots trimly kept by many persons."

Mr. Coryat's compassion was greatly excited on behalf of the "pretty innocent punies," who served as chorister-boys at the festival of Corpus Christi in the church of Notre Dame; "for they had not a quarter so much haire left upon their heads as they brought with them into the world, beingsoclean shaved awayround about their whole heads, that a man could perceive no more than the very rootes." At this festival above named, the Crown of Thorns was shown to the faithful, but a little later on it appeared that the Crown of Thorns was preserved at Vicenza, and had been there since the reign of Louis the Ninth. So the one in Paris must have been a replica. On the other hand, our traveller had the good fortune to listen to the preaching of Peter Molinus, and to hold converse with Isaac Casaubon, who expressed a strong desire that some learned man in England "would write the life and death of Queene Elizabeth in some excellent stile."

Our traveller was struck with the quantity of rye cultivation in France, which he roughly estimates at a hundred times greater than in England and Wales. He was also surprised to find that hemp at Whitsuntide was more advanced than it would be at Midsummer in England; but as Whitsuntide is a movable feast, his remark is worthless as a measure of times and seasons. He was likewise exercised in his mind by the little boughs of box that surmounted many of the roadside crosses. Having apparently forgotten all about Palm Sunday he imagined that they were "put up upon Good Friday to put men in minde that, as Christ was that day scourged amongst the Jews for our sins, so we should punish and whip

ourselves for our own sinnes." Near Montargis he again became aware that he was in a civilised country, for he beheld "a very dolefull and lamentable spectacle, the bones and ragged fragments of clothes of a certaine murderar remaining on a wheele, whereon most murderers are executed: the bones were miserably broken asunder and dispersed abroad upon the wheele in divers places." Considering that Englishmen had obtained on the Continent the nickname of "Goddams," so far back as the days of Joan of Arc, it is amusing to find an English traveller denounce a "most diabolical custome" of French postillions. "Whensoever their horses doe a little anger them, they wil say in their fury, Allons diable, that is, Go, thou divell. Also if they happen to be angry with a stranger upon the way upon any occasion, they will say to him, Le diable t'emporte, that is, The divell take thee. This I know by mine owne experience."

At Nevers, Mr. Coryat encountered a greater number of "roguish Egyptians" than he had ever before seen in any one place. He seems to have regarded their swarthy complexion as artificial, and he adds: "Both their haire and their faces looked so blacke, as if they were raked out of hel, and sent into the world by great Beelzebub to terrifie and astonish mortall men; their men are very Russians and swashbucklers, having exceeding long black haire curled, and swords or other weapons by their sides. Their women also suffer their haire to hang loosely about their shoulders." In that same town he saw wooden shoes for sale, the price being "two sowses, which is twopence-farthing," so that our traveller can hardly be quoted as a trustworthy cambist. Between Moulins and St. Geran, another "very ruefull and tragicall object" presented itself, in "ten men hanging in their clothes upon a goodly gallows made of free stone, whose bodies were consumed to nothing; onely their bones and the ragged fitters of their clothes remained." At Lyons, we are told, most of the windows were made of white paper, though in some parts of the city the upper panes were of glass, and also at Chambéry. Many of our readers may have seen painted upon country toll-bars, a quaint dirge: "Poor Credit! who killed him? Bad paymasters." The same idea might have been traced well-nigh three centuries ago in one of the courts of "the fayrest Inne in the whole citie," The Three Kings, where the Earl of Essex lodged with all his train for

several days. The "pretty French poesie" ran as follows: "On ne loge ceans à credit, car il est mort, les mauvais paiieurs l'ont tué." Among the spectacles of Lyons was that of a man "whipped openly in the streets, who was so stout a fellow that, though he received many a bitter lash, he did not a jot relent at it." The same sort of thing might have been witnessed in English towns at a much later date.

The roads of Savoy are described as abominably bad, but much admiration is expressed with regard to the walnut and chestnut trees, the latter being so abundant that pigs were fed upon the fruit. A very unpleasant custom of the country is recorded of certain towns in Italy. If a man carried about with him more money than was deemed warrantable, it was at once confiscated to the local prince or magistrate. Not far from Turin, Coryat saw for the first time in his life "a strange kinde of corne," which he calls "Panicke," but which was evidently maize; and at Padua he made the acquaintance of "a certaine rare tree," whereof he had read in Virgil and other authors, and which is known to Englishmen as the plane-tree. Another novelty is thus described: "The Italians, and also most strangers that are commorant in Italy, doe alwaies at their meals use a little forke when they cut their meate. For while with their knife which they hold in one hand, they cut the meate out of the dish, they fasten their förke which they hold in their other hand upon the same dish, so that whatsoever he be that, sitting in the company of any others at meale, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meate with his fingers from which all at the table doe cut, he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the lawes of good manners, in so much that for his error he shall be at the least brow beaten, if not reprehended in wordes." The Italians, we read, did not like having their meat touched with fingers, because all fingers are not equally clean, but no other nation of Christendom was then equally fastidious. Forks were usually made of iron or steel, though gentlemen sometimes used silver forks. On his return to England, the author adhered to that "forked cutting of meat," for which his learned familiar friend, Mr. Lawrence Whitaker, "in his merry humour doubted not to call me at table furcifer." With our author's taste for the vindication of human justice, it would have been strange had he passed over unnoticed the porphyry stone

at the south corner of St. Mark's Church, in Venice, on which "are laide for the space of three days and three nights, the heads of all such as being enemies or traitors to the State, or some notorious offenders, have been apprehended out of the citie, and beheaded by those that have been bountifully hired by the Senate for the same purpose." It was said that as much as twenty thousand ducats had been given to a man for bringing a traitor's head to that place. Near that stone he observed "a marvailous faire paire of gallows made of alabaster, the pillars being wrought with many curious borders and workes, which served for no other purpose but to hang the duke whensoever he shall happen to commit any treason against the State." In the meantime the transverse beam was kept out of sight.

The "playhouses" at Venice are described as "very beggarly and base in comparison of our stately playhouses in England; neyther can their actors compare with us for apparell, shewes, and musick." Here, for the first time, though the innovation had already been occasionally attempted in London, Coryat beheld women act, and "with as good a grace, action, gesture, and whatsoever convenient for a player, as ever I saw any masculine actor." Men did not sit in galleries, as was then customary in London. "All the men doe sit beneath in the yard or court, every man upon his severall stooles, for the which hee payeth a gazet"—equivalent to an English penny of the period.

The "most fond and impious opinion" still prevailed as to the efficacy of being buried in the habits of a Franciscan friar, for the remission of a third part of one's sins. Another superstitious practice throughout Italy was that at noon and sunset "all men, women, and children must kneele and say their Ave Maria bare-headed wheresoever they are, eyther in their houses or in the streets, when the Ave Marie bell ringeth." But worse than any superstition was the meanness of men of "generose parentage" in doing their own marketings, which was so unlike the conduct of the "English gentleman that scorneth to goe into the market to buy his victuals and other necessities for house-keeping, but employeth his Cooke or Cator about those inferior and sordid matters." On the other hand, it is admitted that the Italians excelled all nations in the rich simplicity of their attire, being exempt

from the "phantastical fashions" which made Englishmen and Frenchmen alike ridiculous. The Italians were thus induced to "brand the Englishman with a notable mark of levity by painting him stark naked, with a paire of shears in his hand, making his fashion of attire according to the vaine invention of his braine-sicke head, not to comeliness and decorum." In the second volume of Coryat's *Crudities* those who are curious on such matters will find a minute description of the Venetian male and female costume.

The mountebanks of Venice were held, in Coryat's time, in high repute. A bad pre-eminence, too, was enjoyed by the bravos, "who at some unlawfull times do commit great villainy. They wander abroad very late in the night to and fro for their prey, like hungry lyons, being armed with a privy coate of maile, a gauntlet upon their right hande, and a little sharpe dagger called a stiletto." If two men quarrelled in the streets, and drew upon one another, the bystanders would look on without attempting to part them, and if one of the combatants chanced to be killed, no notice was taken of the matter unless he happened to be a "gentleman." Wine was dearer in Venice than in other parts of Italy, though a good draught could be had for less than a halfpenny. The *Liatico* is eulogised as "a very cordiall and generose liquor," and the "*Lagryme di Christo*" as "so toothsome and delectable to the taste that a certain stranger, being newly come to the citie, and tasting of this pleasant wine, was so affected therewith that I heard he uttered this speech out of a passionate humour: 'Oh, Domine, Domine, cur non lachrymasti in regionibus nostris!'"

From Venice Coryat travelled by way of Vicenza, Bergamo, and the Grisons to Zurich, before he noticed anything that a modern traveller might not observe in our own days. Not far from the banks of fair Zurich's waters there was "a certaine greene place, made in the forme of a pit," in which malefactors were punished. A little chapel stood hard by, furnished with wheels, and "some clergie man" to minister spiritual consolation to criminals at the end of their journey through life. Should they, however, be so inconsiderate as to tremble overmuch, they were incontinently broken on a wheel to save them the trouble of being carried outside. A few years previous to Coryat's visit "three noble Tigurines were beheaded in that Chapell, because they were so inclined to trembling

that they could not stand uprighte." Five kinds of punishment awaited heinous offenders—beheading, hanging, drowning, burning alive, and breaking upon the wheel. Witchcraft, sorcery, and heresy were, of course, punished at the stake, the ashes of the offenders being thrown into the river "Sylla."

Coryat praises Basle for the beauty of its women—inferior only to Englishwomen—and for the excellent fare at its ordinaries, though the latter was "something deare, no lesse than eight battes a meale, which are twenty pence of our money." Suppers would be protracted sometimes for well-nigh two hours, the Germans being a sociable people, fond of "noble carousing," and of pledging each other in bumpers, and they decline to converse with a man who refuses to "retaliate a healtie," though they did not insult or illtreat him, as was the custom in England. Upon the whole there was decidedly less drunkenness among the Germans than among Englishmen, the monster tun at Heidelberg notwithstanding. This tun, by the way, was then full of generous Rhenish wine, valued at one thousand nine hundred and eighty-eight pounds eight shillings of English money of the period. Ascending to the top by means of a double ladder, our traveller quaffed "two sound draughts" of the amber liquid, but warns his readers to drink moderately, lest their brain "be unnerved" and so they come to miss the direct way down, and reach the ground "with a very dangerous precipitation." In one respect the Italians are pronounced more hospitable than the Germans. Whereas in Lombardy a wayfarer was at liberty to pluck as many grapes as he desired to assuage his thirst, in Germany it was held a grave offence to trespass on a vineyard, and for gathering two small clusters Coryat had to pay twenty pence to redeem his hat, which a churl had knocked off his head with his halberd.

It is needless to follow the wanderer down the Rhine and across Holland to Flushing, whence "a very pleasant and prosperous gale of wind" propelled his bark to London in eight-and-forty hours. He had been absent five months, during which he had travelled one thousand nine hundred and seventy-five miles, and visited forty-five cities, "whereof in France, five; in Savoy, one; in Italy, thirteen; in Rhetia, one; in Helvetia, three; in some parts of high Germanie, fifteen; in the Netherlands, seven." Like many others, he was then

minded to write a book, that all the world might know what he had seen and heard and performed. Unfortunately, his work, which he calls his *Crudities*, is so marred with pedantry, conceit, and egotism, that it is practically useless except to the compilers of guide-books.

A few years later, however, Tom Coryat set out on a much more perilous adventure than the accomplishment of the "grand tour," though he never returned to his native land to astonish his fellow-countrymen with the recital of his wonderful experiences in Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and India. A few letters and short papers alone survive to mark the principal stages in his long journey, which was performed for the most part on foot and in solitude. Half-way between Ispahan and Lahore he had the happiness to meet Sir Robert and Lady Shirley travelling from the Mogul's Court to that of the Shah. He was much pleased to learn that they carried with them copies of his former works, which they intended to show to the King of Persia. Nor, perhaps, was he less gratified by the present of forty shillings bestowed upon him by Lady Shirley in Persian money. In a letter to a friend dated from Ajmere in the year 1615, he states that he found there a Cape merchant and nine other Englishmen negotiating, on behalf of "the right worshipfull Company of Merchants in London, that trade for East India." It had taken him something over fifteen months to journey thither afoot from Jerusalem—"with divers paire of shoes"—a distance estimated by him at two thousand seven hundred English miles. At that time he proposed to return home through Persia, and by way of Babylon and Nineveh to Cairo, thence to Alexandria by the Nile, and there embark for Christendom, "a very immense dimension of ground."

Between Aleppo and Ajmere he was ten months on the road, but his total expenditure did not exceed three pounds sterling, and of that sum ten shillings were cozened out of him by "certaine lewde Christians of the Armenian nation." For the fifty shillings actually expended on himself he "fared reasonable well every daie." In a letter to his mother, dated Agra, October 31st, 1616, he mentions that he had intended to visit Samarcand, until the Great Mogul himself—Jehanghir—took the trouble to dissuade him from the rash enterprise by assuring him that he would

certainly be put to death by the Tartars. At Ajmere, Coryat remained fourteen months, studying Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, and living at free quarters in the houses of the English merchants. He attained to such a mastery of Persian that he was emboldened to make a speech to the king in the presence of his court, who was so well pleased that he threw down to him from a window a hundred pieces of silver (rupees), which he caught in a sheet held by the four corners. Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador, was sorely scandalised at his presenting himself before the king "in that poor and beggarly manner, to crave money from him by flattery." However, he also gave the poor gentleman a gold piece worth twenty-four shillings, which Coryat proposed to keep till he returned to England. At the time of his writing he was possessed of about twelve pounds, which he calculated would last him for three years at the rate of twopence a day, which was ample for Asia, seeing that he drank nothing but water. All this privation he endured from no higher motive than a vainglorious desire to be talked about. It was not fated, however, that he should achieve such distinction even as a traveller. His journeyings, indeed, had run their course at the very time when he was contemplating a visit to the remotest regions of the earth.

His last days were commemorated by the Rev. Edward Terry, chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe's Embassy, who was with him at Mandoa shortly before he intended to leave India for Persia. The reverend gentleman says of him that he was like "a ship that hath too much sail and too little ballast," and that he was constantly exposing himself to ridicule. While crossing Persia he met with a Mr. Richard Steel, a merchant in the service of the East India Company, who afterwards informed King James that he had come across Coryat in Persia. The two again met at Mandoa, when this same Mr. Steel told the other that on his mentioning their former rencounter to the king, His Majesty had replied: "Is that fool yet living?" "which, when our poor pilgrim heard, it seemed to trouble him very much, because the king spake no more nor no better of him, saying that kings would speak of poor men what they pleased." At his departure Sir Thomas Roe gave him a letter of introduction to the British Consul at Aleppo, which began as follows: "Mr. Chapman, when you shall hand these

letters, I desire you to receive the bearer of them, Mr. Thomas Coryate, with curtesy, for you shall find him a very honest poor wretch; and further, I must intreat you to furnish him with ten pounds, which shall be repayed," etc. The gift was acceptable, but the personal allusion was very galling to Coryat's vanity. However, he never returned to Aleppo. On reaching Surat he was hospitably welcomed by the English merchants, who produced some sack which had lately arrived from England. "Sack, sack!" he exclaimed; "is there any such thing as sack? I pray you give me some sack." He drank of it, Mr. Terry assumes, in moderation, "for he was a very temperate man," but it increased the dysentery from which he was suffering, and in a few days he was at rest. A monument was raised to mark the spot where he was buried, but the memory of the man himself soon passed out of the minds of his contemporaries.

A LEGEND OF CEUTA.

THE mighty Emir, Alahor, a deadly oath he swore,
The race of traitor Julian should cumber earth no more.

He heeded not the guerdon won, the golden prize
Of Spain;

"He who has broken fealty once, may play his part
again."

Though Julian's power is set at naught, and
crushed is Julian's pride.

"Though 'neath the towers of Malaga, the broken-
hearted died;

"Though to his hole the serpent crawl, his spawn
is living still,

All trace of him I banish earth;" so spoke the
Emir's will.

With barely fifteen cavaliers, Count Julian's way
is won,

Where Marcuellos' lofty hold, looks down on
Aragon.

And where the towers of Ceuta, frown o'er the
frowning sea,

Where 'gainst its base the winter tides beat long
and heavily,

Sore weeping for her daughter dead, her ruined
house and name,

Close clasping her last treasure left, Countess
Frاندina came.

She was warned by fearful vision, by the warning
that he gave:

Who with pale lips and burning eyes rose from his
early grave:

"The bloodhounds are upon thy track; thy course
is well-nigh run;

From the tiger grasp of Alahor, sister, guard thou
thy son!"

She drew the fair boy to her arms, the last of all
her race;

She kissed the ebon curls, she kissed the bright
young laughing face.

"The foe is at our heels, my child, dost fear the
dark?" she said.

"Dost fear to hide by Florinda, who sleeps amid
the dead?"

"Why should I fear my sister fair?" Alahor said,
and smiled,
And in Ceuta's darkling vaults Frاندina left her
child.

All through the desperate strife that raged around
the lofty wall,

All through the turmoil of the siege, repulse, and
loss, and fall,

Couched 'mid the marble coffins, by pitying angels
kept,

Calm as if clasped in guardian arms, the dark-eyed
baby slept.

Frاندina's gallant fight was lost, and haughty and
serene,

In her own castle hall she stood, a captive, yet a
queen.

"Give me thy child," the Emir spoke, and quietly
she said,

"Ask thou what mortals have to give, my boy is
with the dead."

"Thou liest; false the lying lips of Julian's wife
must be;

Give me thy child, lest torture wring reluctant
truth from thee!"

"Do what thou wilt," nor drooped her eye, nor
paled her proud lips' red,

"I speak the truth, who speak no more, my child
is with the dead."

The mighty Emir, Alahor, in gloomy wrath he
heard,

But slow, cold Yuza read the face, and heeded not
the word.

And in the crafty wisdom a childless age will
teach,

He saw the lurking terror beneath the dauntless
speech;

"Search through the hold," he said, "and bring
the woman in your train."

Through bower and hall and basement, they sought,
but sought in vain.

He marked her falter, as beneath the chapel roof
they trode;

He bade them tear the altar down, and dash
aside the rood.

Then as the baffled war-dogs paused, he saw the
light of joy,

Flash for a moment in her eyes, and thought "She
has her boy."

And through the subtle brain there passed the
words that she had said;

"Halt ho," exclaimed the hard old man, "seek
now amid the dead."

"And if naught else amid the vaults, our fortune
'tis to find,

At least we'll fling La Cava's bones, to wither in
the wind."

Where fair Florinda lay, at last from care and
woe at rest,

They found Alahor sleeping calm upon his sister's
breast.

With ruthless hands they dragged him forth, with
ruthless grasp they bore

The frantic mother to her cell, and barred the
massive door.

Mid frowning brows, and angry words, undaunted
passed the child,

And standing by the tyrant's throne, looked up at
him and smiled.

Then spoke the Emir, Alahor, "Too fair and sweet
his face.

Take thou the child, oh, Yuza. I have sworn to
crush his race."

The old man with the cold grey eyes, up by the
winding stair,

To the tall tower led the babe, and showed where
rich and fair,
Beyond the dancing waves, beyond the blue
majestic main,
Lay smiling in the evening light, the golden shores
of Spain.
Upon the loftiest parapet he set the child. "Dost
fear?"
"Nay, father, for my Spain is there, and thy
firm hold is here."
"Stretch out thy hands then to thy Spain, the Spain
thy father gave
To us and ours, stretch out thy hands, and greet
the Moslem's slave."
And wonderingly the pretty boy held out his little
hands—
A push! a cry! and far below, down on the yellow
sands,
Down 'mid the cruel boulders, down in the dread
abyss,
The corpse of a fair murdered child lay for the
waves to kiss,
Lay for the gentle breeze to fan, the gentle rains
to weep,
While kindly sea-blossoms softly wreathed about his
dreamless sleep.
And fearlessly and calmly, Frandina met her
doom.
When love, and life, and hope are gone, what
terrors has the tomb?
But legends say that when at last lay Yuza down
to die,
With his last moan of agony, there blent a baby's
cry!

THE TROOPING OF THE HAMLYNS.

A GHOST STORY.

"THESE matters are rarely explained." So that very, vague person James Ducie was vaguely ending.

"Just because people never have the will to go beyond the surface. Shallowness, mere shallowness, my good sir."

So answered I, a middle-aged woman, with a little of the quality of determination.

"It may be so, and yet—yet I opine that they may be also some of the countless links which go to make the indestructible chain—"

"Chain of fiddlesticks!" I said. "Do not wander. You will lose yourself to a certainty."

This James Ducie we were pleased to laugh at, I and my cousin's children, to whom I was Aunt Bell by courtesy. Harum-scarum beings these children were, though some were old enough to be wise, and utterly opposite in nature to the man of whom they made so much fun. Dreamy, thoughtful, visionary—that is what he was. He even was said to write poetry.

"Not so, Miss Haygarth. 'We have to leave the higher reasonings when we talk of such unembodied, perhaps aerial existences, and call up our greatest human faculty—'"

"What's that?" irreverently broke in Sylvia, his eldest torment, aged nineteen.

"Imagination." How calm and certain was the answer!

"The very smallest," I contradicted. "You'd be a sensible man, James Ducie, if you set your heel on your imagination."

"What is all the squabble about?" came in a hearty voice. Norman Ronalds, a cousin of the children's, had just come in from shooting.

We were in a little room on the ground-floor, a room which was sometimes a morning-room, sometimes a smoking-room, sometimes the boys' holiday mess-room, sometimes the girls' millinery-room, always the haven of comfort. We were in more than dusk, and were waiting for some tea.

"Fire and water!" and Sylvia flourished one hand towards me and the other towards the family friend, James Ducie.

"Aunt Bell and Mr. Ducie?" laughed the young man. "And what is it now?"

"Being the 'witching hour' of day," explained Sylvia, "we thought to raise our spirits by talking of the family ghosts. We've nailed the philosopher, because he'll explain for her. Twenty years has Aunt Bell known the house, and she's not seen the dear loves yet."

"Nor ever shall," I declared emphatically. Fancy me a ghost-seer—me! Of course I did not, do not, never will believe in such rubbish; not I.

"He was in the midst of the most sweet explanation," the girl went on with a fine gravity. "It was all mist, and vacuity, and vagueness, and spiritualisings—big words too." She measured the air with her arms in illustrative pantomime.

"She's given in, then?" Norman squeezed his chair in between me and the fire, and made believe to be cold. "I've got the creeps, Aunt Bell," he said; "haven't you?"

"No."

"A faithless unbeliever still? Do you know the punishment for all such as condemn the legend of Craye Holm?" he asked in a mystic tone.

"Not I." With defiance I added: "And what's more, I do not care."

"But it's all perfectly true, Aunt Bell," put in Bridget, who was one year younger than Sylvia, and one degree wilder. "We've all seen him, or her, or them—there's a pleasant irregularity about the dears—from the sage over there to our youngest born!"

"You ruin your cause," I said. "How could a child of four see a ghost?"

"Precocity of the imaginative faculty, I suppose," retorted Sylvia. "I can talk as well as you, James, can't I?"

"Far better," he said quietly. "I think, Miss Haygarth," he went on, "that fact of Nora's seeing something is an argument for the reality of the appearance."

"I don't see it."

"Eh!" cried Norman, "you don't see; but I saw that very moment! The whole troop, I declare! Bridget, an' you love me, draw down the blind."

"I don't love you, so we'll leave it up. They're about, so Aunt Bell has a chance." She jumped past me and went to look out through the window.

To me there was only the rimy darkening of autumn. What folly was all this! But you'd like to know what the folly was. Here it is.

The Holm was an old place. Somewhere in the dark ages, so went the story, a certain son and a certain daughter were cast off. Whither they went history tells not, but one supposes the East—does not the East hold all mysteries? A year and a day—with many repetitions of course—passed, and the two came back. Both were grey-haired folk, and both came with a following of children and grandchildren. Surely with two so noble trains they would be welcomed to the old home?

Not a bit of it. They were dismissed with some words which were not of the most pleasant. One must make excuses for the language which we do not find elegant enough for modern ears—they spoke rough Saxon in those "dark ages."

Well, there was no gainsaying the matter. Bolts and bars, nay, the flying of arrows and the hurling of deadly weapons of war, gave a stronger point to those very strong words. The wailing lady and the raging knight her brother had to wail and to rage away.

They say that the echoes of that mighty wailing and raging—remember all the children and grandchildren—brought down the biggest thunderstorm that was ever known. So big that the old Holm was knocked to smithereens, if you know what that is—anyhow, the new Holm, the one at present existent, was built immediately after.

Built?—yes. And for ever haunted by the spirits of that outlawed company. One, two, many—so they came sweeping past the windows, round the house.

There's the story.

Rubbish, I say. However, there was no

soul of the house who did not believe it like a very gospel.

Mind you, I was in the house, but I was not of the house. My cousin was the wife, not the husband. I was no born Hamlyn, so I was not bound to have faith in any such folly.

"I should like to see them," said Bridget, imitating a baby who cries for the moon.

"There!"

"No." Norman was by her side. "Did you—?"

"Yes, I did. Just one—a filmy lady all alone in a long-skirted foggy robe."

"An invention for my benefit," was my incredulous speech.

"Not at all so, Aunt Bell."

These very wild girls could be cross; in fact, they were weathercocks of impulse. Bridget's gaiety just before was thorough, this sudden melancholy crossness was just as thorough. Not so pleasant, though.

"Not at all so," she repeated, "I have had quite enough—"

"Look, Bridget!" and her cousin turned her bodily round, she having set her back to the eerie window. "There is the whole clan now!"

"I don't see them," she said, shortly.

"You are not looking. Dozens. Dancing, bowing, skimming. It must be a festival dance of the dark ages. There, Ducie, come and look. What's the name of the measure?"

A soft pleased laugh answered the young man.

"I have never seen it to be able to enlighten you."

"No."

Ducie stood before the fire with his back to it.

"Would there not be some upsetting of the old legend if I did? No; I have often seen a solitary man, or woman, or child!"

How his sympathetic voice harmonised with his words.

"That's it," cried Bridget; "'solitary'—you are solitary, but I suppose you've grown used to it. I don't like solitude, and—and there, I won't believe in it."

"The best thing you could do, my dear," I put in unluckily.

"Not at all," she cried, twisting round before my very face; "I will believe, but I won't have—I won't have—James Ducie, don't they ever break their rule?"

She was almost crying.

Quite childish this, thought I. However, I held my peace.

"Are you not wrong, dear," said he, "to attach so much importance to fancied details?"

I nodded my head at him and said:

"You have helped to set the stone rolling. You cannot stop it now."

"Do you know these details, Miss Haygarth?" How sharply did this gentle, vague man turn upon me.

"A bit here, a bit there," I answered, careless.

"Help me out, Bridget, if I am wrong," he said, and I believe the whole of his subsequent rigmarole was just to turn the humour of the girl. "They do come, that is an acknowledged fact." He stopped.

I gave no answer.

"Now for the superstructure in the shape of old wives' fables."

Bridget's head lifted, she was on the verge of a combative impulse.

"The appearances have become prophetic," Ducie began again. "When the appearing figure is lone and solitary, the seeing person is doomed to a life of solitude."

"Bridget, the old maid," put in Sylvia in an excited way; "you've the cut of it, so have I. I've seen these solitary bogies."

"Go on," said Bridget, loftily ignoring this, and gazing expectantly at James Ducie.

"Weeping is, of course, the precursor of a death. Marriage is prefigured by a company of dancers."

"Hooray!" cried Norman.

"Yes; you've got it. I hate it! I hate all of it! Why for you and not for me?"

Whereat we all burst out laughing. Such wild uproarious laughter it was, a laughter that was all for Bridget's most unintentional personal pointing. It suddenly stopped as such violent laughing does.

Sylvia reached a candle from the mantelshelf, and declared she must light it. She certainly was a little excited, and her fair cheeks were rosier than usual. Could I not be sure of this as she came close to the firelight?

"Mr. Ducie," enquired Norman in a mock business way, "will these dancing progenitors of mine give a fellow a lift, do you think? I am unluckily only the third son of my father. Bob and Dick cost him such a lot. I'm an irreproachable Civil Servant at two hundred a year; a fellow cannot marry on that. Does your information go so far as to suppose that they have any hoards hidden anywhere?"

"No, I think not," he said quietly; "it

is this faith in the fable which is so much to be deplored. Can there be any control emanating from the spirit of a past age which shall influence the narrow existence of one of us? Now, I go no further than myself. Could any change in the appearance I see change now the settled course of my existence?"

I started.

"All-sufficient man!" I exclaimed, "do you order your own existence?"

"Years and circumstances have ordered it. I think——"

He had fallen into his dreamy way, and, as like goes to like, his gaze went away from the animated faces about him to the dim dreariness of twilight out of doors. Literally, it was more darkness than twilight by that time, and one could see the red and yellow reflection of our dancing fire on the outer mist.

"See with my eyes, Bridget, and be comforted." He spoke more lightly, even quite gaily. Taking her hand, he pointed to the window. "Norman is right; the whole clan, as his Scotch tongue calls it, is out to-night. Dear me! there must be marriages for every individual in the house. Do look. Is it not quite pretty?"

He turned to me, to me the sceptic, and I had not the heart to contradict him roughly.

He was too absorbed to notice my lack of answer.

"So graceful—ah, that is quaint! There is a character in the measure. I must try and remember it. Can it be a reproduced dance of those ill-starred times? Strange—strange——"

"Show me! show me!" Bridget's cry and clutch at his arm broke his calm dreamy watching.

"Everywhere, my child. Truly it is a very masquerade of spirits."

"But I do not see—no, I am not meant to see."

As with all impulsive people, this change in Bridget touched the extreme of woe. Such a sad wailing was in the dear young voice.

"It is growing quite sinful," I declared severely. I could not endure this—the wildest, the best of all the children to be so crushed by a mere phantasm. "No, Mr. Ducie; I insist upon ending this. Bridget child, look with me," and I drew her cold hand through my arm. "You see the reflection of the fire. Look at the gay tongues of fire, the splutter of the sparks—there, that one bright gas-like flame. Why"—I

dashed my words in like a tornado—"the fire is playing Old Harry with the mist and the autumn vapours. It's October, mind, and a good damp October too! Now we'll have tea and lights."

Without more ado I pulled down the blind, and I believe Ducie saw the wisdom of my move—he had lighted two candles.

The next thing, the tea, was at that most opportune moment brought in.

Times went on, and events, those events that must come when a growing-up family becomes grown up, made a revolution in the lively monotony—yes, the contradicting words express what I wish to say—the lively monotony of Craye Holm.

First and foremost Sylvia Hamlyn and Norman Ronalds were to be married. Norman's two hundred a year suddenly grew and became something much larger; only, as a consequence, he must pack up and go to India.

A change had come over Bridget, some vague change which I cannot quite explain, but it was one which made her gay wildness of a more spasmodic sort. She would be simply incomprehensibly wild and gay, then a few moments would send her into stillness, even into a stillness that was brooding.

I was worried about it.

Another change was that the constant visitor, James Ducie, the man of books and of dreamy ways, had—how he came by it I never knew—been pleased to accept some professorship somewhere.

Rather vague, you say; but it was enough to satisfy my utterly incurious mind.

For myself, I had stayed at the Holm more than had been my custom—they said they wanted me for the wedding.

The wedding was to be in June.

It was the week before the wedding, the house was full. Norman himself was a perfect nuisance of a lover, for he reduced Sylvia to a nonentity. She was hardly to be spoken to by anybody but her tyrant.

However, I would be the last to grumble, for his best man was down at the Holm for that week with him—he was a man worthy the name. I never thought much of masculine humanity, but I suppose I had saved some sort of an ideal out of the wrecks of my youth. I am a good deal over thirty, mind you, and above every possible ideal I would place David Fortescue.

He, too, was in the Civil Service, and

was waiting for some such post as his friend Ronalds had won. However, his social status was nothing in the matter. Whether he had been a prince or a day-labourer, he was a king among men.

My dear old Bridget, how glad I was, how fervently, seraphically happy was I, when David and you came to me hand-in-hand, and with your brave clear eyes shone down into my heart the story you had lighted upon!

What a pity the marriage could not have been turned into a double marriage!

Things will not go as seem best. Fortescue got his orders to sail, but he did not get his high appointment. He could have no wife for a year.

I am hurrying on—this news he brought down to the Holm just one week after Sylvia and her husband had left it.

Both Bridget and David were too brave to flinch. What was the decree? It only meant a year's waiting, perhaps not so long.

What grand and glorious weather it was at that time! So perfect an English June, with the leafage all of purest green, the air warm and fresh, fleecy cloudlets sailing on high like feathery birds against the still blue above, a broad radiant shining of the sunlight across lawns and flower-beds—nay, right into the farthest nook of the room.

I was in the little room where my story found its opening. The lovers had gone out through its window, and I could see them wandering sweetly and slowly behind the thick green of a holly hedge. I was at work, but my thoughts led me to drop my work.

I seemed too happy, too thoroughly suffused with gladness. I was in no whit sleepy—no, certainly not, but the serenity of happiness led me to fold my hands and to gaze, just simply to gaze at the golden radiance of sunshine.

Ah, why ever must the children come bothering me now?

The whole tribe of nursery Hamlyns were scampering round one after another.

I forget whether I ever mentioned the fact of there being some half-dozen young Hamlyns up in the nursery.

I drew myself behind a lace curtain so that they should not see me; my humour just then was not appreciative of children. I looked through to see if they would go.

Ha! what was that? Who were they? Not Hamlyn children.

They were dancing past my window—shadowy children, with the sunlight goldening their shady selves.

But their feet made no crunching of the gravel; the air brought no ringing of children's laughter. Suddenly I was chilly and shivered, and yet—yet I would not believe. I stood out on the step of the window to look for real children.

The vision had come to me and I should no longer be able to deny. Ah me! I must have been dreaming.

No. It was no use trying to suppose that, for I was not one degree away from perfect and most intense wakefulness.

I fought hard against believing.

After that day (I confessed it to no one) I did again and again see—no, more often feel, that strange weird passing of figures outside a window. It was nothing terrific, nothing more than the semblance of a person going by whose shadow fell upon your book or your work, and when you looked up—lo! no one.

I went home, and while there I heard that David Fortescue had started. Strangely, from that day I shrank from thinking about my dear Bridget and her marriage. Perhaps it was that the fact of my having seen the troops of Hamlyns with my own mortal and sceptical eyes had unnerved the vain common-sense of me, and was dragging me down to a weak fear of what Bridget's own vision had foretold.

Her "lonely lady!" My dancing children! I fought hard; sense was winning; the show was false for me—bah! what marriage did I want? Would it not be false—happily false for her?

My brave Bridget was too full of the fire of her love ever to bear the fate of that lonely lady.

Times went on, I again say. But in the months and days there were no events to chronicle. I was never at the Holm, though I saw the Holm people.

On Christmas Eve, I, being a woman alone, was to go there; it was one of those true English houses where many lone people get assembled at Christmas-time.

Bridget met me down at the lodge, and would mount the rickety station-fly, and tell me her news.

She had heard from David—she would have to go to David in March. David had done some such wonderful service that he was to be promoted at once. This

letter was dated from some place where he had been sent to arrange some "botheration amongst the natives."

So Bridget put it. Everything was "David" until we gave the sharp swing where the larches come in sight, the larches that belt in the lower lawn in front of the house, when Bridget clutched my hand and laughed:

"You are the only person we could victimise, and of course you don't mind."

"Well?"

"You've got to sleep in the dragon-room?"

"Have I?"

Now the dragon-room was called so, because it had some hangings of old chintz upon which dragons were represented as devouring, and also as breathing forth—flowers. Non-æsthetic, certainly. Besides this, it was the haunted room; how haunted I had never heard.

A year ago I would have craved to sleep in that room. I did not like it now—my face evidently declared this.

"Why, Aunt Bell!"

"Do not shriek, my dear Bridget." I would be stoically calm.

"You do believe at last. Well, I am the sceptic now, as I have a right to be," she gaily laughed, "and I am going to sleep there with you."

"Do not imagine I have the least fear—the least fear. Only, if you do know what the haunting is, let me know so that I may be prepared."

"I've been trying to get at that myself, but it's no use. No one was ever known to repeat what that room discloses."

"Stuff!" With derision my courage grew.

"Nurse slept there once, and—there was something. But she won't tell—no, wild horses will not drag it from her, she says."

"I shall proclaim whatever I see." Here I had to break off, for I was being welcomed and kissed, and made much of.

I would like to say a great deal about that Christmas Eve. There was no day in my foregone life so good—well, I know what has come since, so I will rigidly hold back another word lest I should be tempted to say too much of personal matters.

James Ducie was there, but, was he not a lone man as I was a lone woman?

It was long past twelve o'clock that night before Bridget and I were in bed, both quite tired out, and proof against the haunting of any restless spirit. Surely

we were safe for that night, for had not the clock said that it was already Christmas?

Bridget fell asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow.

So did I—yes. But I awoke suddenly, chillingly, with a fearful tremor upon me. The dimness of the night-light had become a glare as of fire.

I sat up in bed. I tried to wake Bridget—no, my hands were powerless to touch her. I tried to scream. I had no voice.

Then a consciousness came into me that I saw no mortal flames. It was no fire to destroy the old walls of the Holm; it was the vision.

Yes, my eyes would not close. I must—must see what was being done.

The room was one lurid glare of light, there were figures—oh, horror!

I must be silent. What I saw can never be told. If it were an old tale re-told—if it were a prophecy—no, the details are before me, but my tongue can never speak them, my pen can never write them. So I thought, so I felt.

Some weird command of secrecy was binding me as it had bound every former seer of the horrible vision.

Bridget slept late the next morning. As for me, I was awake, alert, wishful to get downstairs, yet fearful about leaving the girl in that dreadful room.

I could say nothing; I was tired, tired with my journey. And I yawned and made much ado over my fancied weariness, and left her.

I was the first down.

James Ducie was next; Sir Marmaduke Hamlyn, our host, was next.

He left us to ourselves and began to read his paper. He was rather a silent man, and the uproar of Christmas greetings would be quite enough for him when the whole tribe of all ages came down as they must do on Christmas morning.

We left him to himself.

All at once we heard this:

"My God!"

Sir Marmaduke was white to the lips, and he was clutching at the newspaper.

"What?" "What is it?" "What is wrong?" we two exclaimed.

"Read!" he gasped.

We did read. A telegram from India. A commissioner, some English officials, had been surprised by disaffected natives—murdered.

Then came the list of those killed, the third name was David Fortescue.

It was only a telegram. Short, unmistakable, sure.

I must have behaved strangely. James Ducie was holding me up.

I pulled myself together, and I forced the words out of my lips.

"My vision!" I said. "Yes," after that first effort I could speak; "yes, that is what I saw last night. I was in that room!"

I must have looked strange still, for James Ducie still held me.

"Friends," began Sir Marmaduke in a stony voice, "let this be secret for to-day. Bridget, where is Bridget?"

"Not dressed yet."

"That is well; let the child have one more good Christmas Day. The letters will be in soon enough."

What a day was that! What a horror of masking!

They were all so glad, so joyous—poor Sir Marmaduke with his stiff ways had never been known to be so genial—how one can act when the need comes!

And Bridget?

Bridget was the life of the gay life. She was wild with joy, a humour of her maddest childhood was upon her. Towards the afternoon she fell away from all this, and said some such sweet tender words to me—was it some foreknowledge stealing upon her?

I know not. I bade her be gay and happy.

"So I am, Aunt Bell; but—is it the influence of that room, do you think?"—in the midst of her tender sad humour a flash of the original Bridget shone in her eyes—"I feel eerie!" she ended.

"Nonsense!" I made myself talk in my old manner.

"Very likely, Aunt Bell; very likely it is all nonsense. But I cannot get rid of the 'lonely lady' I used to see."

Her boy-brothers were shouting to her to go and skate with them, and she ran off.

Poor Bridget! I never saw again the gay wild gladness of her. When next I did see her was in the Christmas gloaming, and she lay white and still, and smiling with a most sweet calm on her dear lips. I loved to think that that smile was a reflex from the unknown land where she and David Fortescue had so soon found a meeting-place.

She and a young brother had gone on to dangerous ice and had fallen in. She had saved the brother—herself? ah, I think for

herself that was also a saving; how could Bridget have lived a life of solitude? How could she have been for long years a "lonely lady?"

We often talk it over, James Ducie and I, but we never find an ending. His professorship forced him to have a house and to live in London; how could a man such as he exist like that—alone?

"He wanted common-sense to take care of him," so he said. It was like his gentle self to put his desire so. I believe I am helping him a bit. But I am sure I never dreamt of marriage for such an ancient person as I.

SOME FRENCH MISERS.

WE have often wondered, notwithstanding the prejudice which is popularly supposed to exist against that class of individuals so ably described in Molière's *Avare*, how it is that they are, comparatively speaking, so few in number. When we consider the inducements insidiously held out by proverbial philosophy, and recall to mind, among others, the well-known and indisputably stimulating adages, "A penny saved is a penny got," and "A pin a day is a groat a year," is it not a marvel that, taking mankind in the aggregate, so many are able to resist the temptation of emulating Harpagon, and cultivating a propensity which, after all, costs them nothing? Do we not ourselves, moreover, practically—although, of course, unintentionally—encourage our own offspring to "increase their store" by providing them with a money-box in the shape of a box with a slit in the top for the insertion of coin, the contents of which are only to be extracted by the breakage of the receptacle? It may be argued that, when this summary process has in due time been effected, the possessor of the treasure is far more likely to spend it than to hoard it up; which view of the case appears at first sight not only possible, but—if we may trust certain recollections of our own prodigality under similar circumstances—sufficiently probable; but there are exceptions to every rule, and the example of Master Bullock in *Dr. Birch and His Young Friends*, in whom the "auri sacra fames" was evidently innate, and who, by a judicious system of exacting a penny a week by way of interest for every sixpence lent to his fellow-pupils,

invariably left school with more money in his pocket than he had on arriving there, may be quoted as a by no means solitary instance of prudential economy.

Early impressions, we are told, are generally lasting, and it may therefore be concluded that those who in after-life have become notorious misers were in the days of their youth, like Master Bullock, more or less affected by the same deplorable mania, thereby illustrating the principle laid down by the poet that "the child is father to the man." We may imagine Harpagon or Balzac's Grandet saving up every sou they could lay their hands on, legitimately or otherwise, and, little by little, exchanging copper for silver, and silver for gold, each successive addition to the mass contributing fresh fuel to the ruling passion, until their whole existence was gradually absorbed by it. The comedy then becomes a drama, and a painfully repulsive one, on which it is no pleasure to dwell. We prefer looking upon this "travers d'esprit" from a humorous point of view, and have grouped together a few anecdotal specimens, picked up here, there, and everywhere—for, in humble imitation of the great Poquelin, we take our "bien" where we find it—which, if not absolutely new, are, at all events, characteristic, and may possibly have escaped the notice of the general reader.

A very singular type of the genus miser is mentioned in the entertaining pages of that indefatigable retailer of contemporary gossip, Tallemant des Réaux. His name is not recorded, but, according to the chronicler, he was of good family, and during the earlier part of his life occupied a distinguished position in society. As he grew older, he mixed less with the world than formerly, and eventually withdrew from it altogether, taking up his abode in an old tumble-down house belonging to him in a remote quarter of the town, having previously dismissed his servants and sold their liveries, with the exception of one solitary coat-sleeve, which he reserved for a particular purpose. In this wretched hovel—for it was little else—he vegetated for many years, limiting his daily expenditure to the smallest amount necessary to secure him from absolute starvation, and passing his time in the contemplation of his money-bags, of which he possessed a goodly store. In the midst of this self-imposed penury, however, he was so sensitively desirous of keeping up appearances that, whenever he had occasion to open his window for the

purpose of discharging, as was then the common practice, the refuse of his scanty meals on the heads of the unfortunate passers-by, he invariably slipped the one extended arm into the showily-embroidered coat-sleeve, in order that the idea of his being his own domestic might never suggest itself to the imagination of his neighbours.

Some years ago, during a ramble with a friend in Touraine, one of our fellow-passengers in the ferry-boat from Luynes was an elderly individual in a threadbare jacket and patched trousers, whose exterior betokened such utter destitution that we felt moved to compassion, and remarked to our companion that a trifle in the shape of a few sous would doubtless be acceptable to him. To our astonishment he burst out laughing, and informed us in a whisper that the miserable object in question could buy up half the district if he chose, and that he would tell us more about him by-and-by. On resuming our walk, he satisfied our curiosity by explaining that old Roublard—for such was his name—had the reputation of being the richest landed proprietor in the arrondissement, and the most insatiable miser in all Touraine.

"He is the man," continued our friend, "who, when a valuable horse belonging to him fell sick, purchased much against his will, and after considerable haggling, a bottle of medicine from the local apothecary and carried it home. On his arrival, finding that the animal had partially recovered, and no longer needed the remedy, he thought it a pity that such good, wholesome stuff should be wasted, so drank it himself, and nearly died of it. But of all the stories told of him the following is the best: He had agreed to let a piece of ground to a small farmer, and the terms having been finally settled between the contracting parties in the village wine-shop, which also served as a branch post-office, the new tenant thought it incumbent on him to do the civil thing, and asked his landlord what he would take.

"'Thanks,' replied Roublard; 'I never drink between meals.'

"'But, M. Roublard,' urged the other, probably not disinclined to improve the occasion by wetting his own whistle, 'you really must take something just to oblige me.'

"'Well,' said Roublard, after a cursory glance round the shop and on the counter, 'if you insist on it, I'll take—ahem!—I'll take a postage-stamp!'

Those who may happen to have been

familiar with Paris life some five-and-twenty years ago will remember the Marquis d'Aligre, one of the wealthiest and most avaricious noblemen in France or anywhere else. Although the owner of a magnificent hôtel in the Rue de la Ville l'Evêque, in addition to an immense amount of funded property, he lived like an anchorite, wore his clothes until they nearly dropped off his back, and was currently believed to be the original of Gavarni's penurious old gentleman, "*qui coupait les liards en quatre*." It is recorded of him that, being obliged by some important business to pass the night in a small country town, he took up his quarters at an inn of very moderate pretensions, and beginning to feel hungry, for he had travelled all day, called the waiter, and enquired what was the usual charge for dinner.

"Three francs, monsieur."

"Very dear," grumbled the marquis. "And how much for breakfast?"

"A franc and a half."

"Then bring me breakfast. Ce sera toujours trente sous de sauvés!"

After M. d'Aligre's death, most of his effects were sold by auction, and several of them fell into the hands of perambulating hucksters; among the latter was a most interesting letter of the celebrated Adrienne Lecouvreur addressed to Madame d'Argental, mother of Louis the Fifteenth's minister, which its late possessor, not wishing to put himself to the expense of a frame, had pasted into the border of an old worm-eaten hand-mirror, to all appearance discarded from a servant's room. This precious relic was purchased by an actor of the Palais Royal theatre, curious in such matters; and, after having successively figured in two collections, was recently disposed of by a London autograph dealer for sixteen pounds.

We can perfectly well remember the economical old gentleman of the Batignolles, who for upwards of twenty years contrived to enjoy a light and palatable breakfast at an almost nominal cost. Every morning he was regularly to be found at one or other of the early markets, carrying in his pocket a halfpenny roll, and inspecting with the eye of a connoisseur the baskets of fruit temptingly exposed for sale. Every now and then he paused before some more than usually attractive stall, and enquired the price of the cherries or strawberries, as the case might be.

"Six sous a pound, monsieur," was the probable answer.

"May I taste them?" he asked in the blindest tone imaginable.

"Certainly, monsieur."

Whereupon he quietly selected half-a-dozen of the ripest, and commenced operations by alternately swallowing a cherry (or strawberry) and a bit of roll until the supply of the former was exhausted, when he invariably shook his head gravely, made a wry face, and politely informing the obliging saleswoman that they were "rather sour," passed on to another stall, and continued his little game with a similar result. When fruit was out of season, he contented himself with butter, which, however, by some strange coincidence, was never sufficiently fresh for his epicurean palate; nor, during that long lapse of years, had any dealer in the market occasion to boast that she had ever seen a farthing of his money.

One of the most notorious misers during the regency of the Duke of Orleans was the President Rose. At the close of an exceptionally severe winter a subscription having been organised for the relief of the poor, a deputation waited upon him one morning at the hour when he was accustomed to receive his friends and colleagues, and solicited a contribution. The President, finding it impossible to refuse, put a small piece of money into the purse handed to him, and passed it on to his next neighbour. Presently another member of the committee, who had only just entered the room, accosted him with a similar request.

"I have already contributed," replied Rose.

"I beg your pardon," apologised the applicant. "I did not see it, but of course I believe what you say."

"And I," quietly observed Fontenelle, who was present on the occasion, "I did see it and don't believe it."

Many inhabitants of Lyons still remember the Père Crépin, who, in the course of a long life of sordid economy, contrived to amass a fortune exceeding two millions of francs. In order to reduce his daily expenses to the lowest possible minimum, he allowed himself no other nourishment than a soup composed of old crusts which he bought wholesale and soaked in water. After a day or two's experience of this meagre fare he had some difficulty in controlling his natural desire for more substantial aliments, to counteract which, whenever the temptation waxed too strong for him, he took from his cupboard a bottle of old rum, which had reposed unopened

on a shelf for a long series of years, placed it on the table beside him, and resumed his meal with the avowed intention of treating himself to a glass of the cordial by way of dessert. By the time, however, that his plate was empty, his miserly instinct was again in the ascendant, and he carefully replaced the uncorked bottle in the cupboard, with the consolatory reflection, "Ce sera pour une autre fois!"

The municipality of Lyons having decreed, with a due regard for the salubrity of the city, that every house should be newly whitewashed, the Père Crépin in despair hurried off to the mayor and besought him, with tears in his eyes, to make an exception in his favour.

"Impossible," was the reply.

"Then, my good sir, I shall be ruined, absolutely ruined!"

"Nonsense, Père Crépin; what difference can a few francs, more or less, make to you?"

"More than you think," retorted the exasperated miser. "If I had only one house to whitewash, I might be able to support the expense, but I have nine."

In this same city of Lyons lived a certain Dr. Galabert, whose avarice and parsimony were proverbial. Having made the acquaintance of the actor Frogères, then engaged at the Grand Theatre, he invited him on several occasions to dine at his house, a request with which the comedian, a lover of good cheer, and naturally distrustful as to the quality of the proposed banquet, showed little inclination to comply. One day, however, happening to meet the doctor at his own door, the latter would take no denial, and triumphantly conducted his unwilling guest into a scantily furnished apartment, where the soup was already on the table.

After vainly attempting to swallow a few mouthfuls of the thin and tasteless liquid set before him, Frogères laid down his spoon, and awaited with increased misgiving the next dish, which shortly appeared in the shape of a diminutive scrap of beef boiled to rags, and pompously designated the "bouilli."

"You have a poor appetite, M. Frogères," remarked the host, attacking, as he spoke, the unsavoury viand with evident relish. "This is my usual dinner, but to-day I have a treat in store for you; some delicious cutlets, the king himself never tasted better."

Somewhat comforted by this announcement, the actor anxiously watched the

attendant crone as she placed the much vaunted dainty before her master, and beheld to his dismay two scraggy chops swimming in grease, which the doctor proceeded to bisect after a peculiar fashion, reserving for himself the meat, and transferring the bones and gristle to his companion's plate.

"And now, M. Frogères," jocosely enquired the Amphytrion, when he had devoured the last eatable morsel, "what would you say to an excellent leg of mutton, tender and juicy?"

"Only try me," eagerly responded the Barmecide's victim; "it is my favourite dish."

"Indeed! Well then, whenever you have one, take my advice, and let it hang for three days in a cool larder, and then serve it up roasted to a turn in its own gravy. Vous m'en direz des nouvelles!"

Frogères remained many years at Lyons, but it is not recorded that he availed himself a second time of Dr. Galabert's hospitality.

The saying, "Charity begins at home," has seldom been more plausibly justified than by a certain rich but parsimonious fashionable of our own day. Being one of the congregation in a country church, where a sermon was preached in behalf of the sufferers from some local calamity, when the plate was handed round, he passed it on to his next neighbour without contributing anything himself. This having been remarked by a lady of his acquaintance who sat near him, she took him to task at the conclusion of the service for his stinginess; upon which he maintained that he had acted strictly in conformity with the Scriptures.

"How do you make that out?" was her very natural enquiry.

"Clearly enough," he replied. "Are we not expressly told that we should not do to others what we would not wish them to do to us?"

"Well?"

"Well, as I do not wish to receive alms from other people, I don't give them."

The following anecdote, which may or may not be authentic, is too good to be omitted. A well-known specimen of the miser fraternity, whose credit is considered in financial circles as almost on a par with that of the Bank of England, while comparing notes with a friend equally rich in worldly goods and of similarly penurious habits, was deploring an extravagance of

which he had recently been guilty. "The fact is," he said, "I had an appointment in the City which I could not afford to miss, as a very large sum depended on my keeping it. Well, it is a long way out yonder, and my legs are not so young as they were, so what do you think I did? I'm half ashamed to tell you, but time pressed, and in another half-hour I should have been too late. You will hardly believe it, I know, but I give you my word of honour that I took the Underground, and I can assure you that I have not forgiven myself for it yet!"

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER II. FOR THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH.

WHERE is the wound so deep that it will not heal beneath the touch of the great physician—Time?

Yet are some scars both wide and deep, showing that the healing process has been long and painful.

It was thus with the Beckington Bank robbery.

For men and women in the middle period of life to awake some fine morning to the cruel fact that all the results of past efforts have melted away like snow in thaw-time, that before them lies that dreary necessity called beginning again, is a terrible experience. Such was the position of many a one in and around Beckington after that memorable autumn when a veritable Black Monday dawned to darken hearts and homes, and drive more than one to the verge of a fatal despair.

High and low, the wealthy, and those whose earthly substance seemed but a small thing indeed over which to make so loud a moan, each and all suffered in the general calamity.

Curses exceedingly loud and exceedingly deep betrayed the fact that Sir Roland Ashby, the squire of Dale End, found himself seriously embarrassed by the losses he had sustained; almost as much so, indeed, as Widow Bunnycastle by the disappearance of that small patrimony which had been left to her by Bunnycastle as a means of keeping a roof over her head. Then, to a man of Sir Roland's violent temper and uncontrolled passions, the fact of there being no culprit upon whose abashed head the vials of his wrath might

be poured out, was an almost unbearable aggravation of his sufferings. To curse their air, to rave at nothingness, is but an unsatisfactory and unsatisfying form of denouncing one's enemies.

For the Bow Street runner had not only proved a physical, but also a professional failure; and all those investigations into the bank robbery (which it will be remembered were to be conducted in strictest secrecy and with closed doors) had all ended in smoke—literally so, since the only trustworthy evidence obtained was that of a trustworthy artisan of the town who, chancing to be abroad at an abnormally early hour on that Black Monday morning, had seen a pale blue film of smoke ascending from the bank chimney.

"If he'd seen what were at t'other end o' t' chimney, oo'd ha' done summat worth talking about," said Farmer Dale. "As things be, he moight as well ha' had his yed i' a bag for a' the good as he can do."

This witness had added to his testimony anent the smoke, that about a mile from the town he had met a farm-labourer, red-bearded and slouching, dressed in a white smock, and low cap. At which item of evidence, Farmer Dale again girded, for said he:

"What else would a farm-labourer be loike to wear but a white smock and a low cap? And for matter of a red beard, Heaven moight so afflict any mon, and even be as honest as if he were of a gradlier colour! If the felly had ketched t'other felly by the throat, and axed him if he'd been robbing t' bank, he moight ha' talked."

Nor could any subsequent reasoning show the farmer that such a course might have been a somewhat out-of-the-way proceeding, seeing that the person chiefly concerned had not at the time either noticed the thin blue curl of smoke stealing out from a nest of ivy-leaves, nor yet heard that the bank had been robbed at all.

The Becklington Bank robbery seemed destined to remain a mystery, and, as a mystery, to be handed down from father to son, and to be talked over on long winter evenings by the ingle-nook, and on long summer Sundays in the tea-gardens and at the bar of The Safe Retreat.

Of this mystery the two crowning mysteries were the boy Davey and the dog Gaylad.

That both should slumber at their posts while desks were being rifled, safes forced open, and ledgers burnt might well puzzle the wisest pate in Becklington, or out of it.

The second clerk, who lived in the bank, slept in a comparatively distant chamber. The porter who had replaced poor Dickory had been, alas! forced to confess, when brought face to face with that unexpected inquisitor, him of Bow Street fame, that an extra glass or two on the Sunday night had made him "a bit 'eavy-headed"—not drunk by any means, oh dear no, nothing of the kind! but just "a bit confiscated"—a phrase which appeared to yield him much satisfaction, as at once hitting the condition of affairs exactly and conveying no reproach.

As to the boy Davey, he underwent his examination at the hands of the law with a composure that was remarkable, giving his evidence with the terseness and clearness to be looked for in one "keen at figures." He woke and rose at the usual hour on that fatal day. The dog Gaylad was lying across the door—also as usual. The creature stretched its long limbs, came to Davey's side, waving its tail slowly from side to side in a dumb morning greeting. Davey perceived no signs of excitement or restlessness about the dog. Very shortly after this he discovered that the safe in his room was open and the keys it always held gone.

He rushed to call his fellow-clerk, the dog beginning to bark uneasily and run about from place to place. This brought the porter to the scene. Soon, as the full extent of the mischief was gradually revealed, all was confusion and dismay.

Davey, having given hasty orders to keep the bank closed and leave the disordered rooms untouched, made his way to the manager's house in Church Lane, never stopping to draw breath until he stood before Anthony Geddes and there told his tale of woe.

Thus began and ended the evidence of David Robin; nor could any sudden cross-questioning, any crafty feints or cunning intricacy of suggestion on the part of the inquisitor, cause him to vary it in one single point.

In fact, after many weary days devoted to these investigations, as has been said before, nothing came of it.

Of course there were false scents which the bloodhounds of the law rushed at headlong, pursued hotly, and brought to earth, only to find they had hunted will-o'-the-wisps and were floundering in bogs of still deeper mystification than before.

Various passengers by royal mail from the north to London were arrested, ques-

tioned, searched, and let go again. Endless rustics, in endless white smocks, were wrongfully taken up and unrighteously detained "at Her Majesty's pleasure" in all parts of the country.

One simple fellow, whom Heaven had seen fit to afflict with a red beard, being marched through the market-place in the custody of Matthew Hawthorne, chiefest of all constables, was so hooted at, groaned at, hustled and hustled, that he nigh upon lost what little sense he had ever possessed, wondering—as well he might—what crime he had unconsciously committed that he should be thus cruelly dealt with. Even when set at liberty and admonished that nothing was proved against him, he seemed haunted by the idea of some mysterious wrong-doing on his own part, and kept on telling the magistrate he would "never do it no more."

Perhaps he meant he would never come to Becklington in search of a job again, that being about the worst day's work he ever did in his life.

Once all the world (of Becklington) was convinced that justice was on the trail of the sinner or sinners at last.

Two suspicious-looking persons (one of the two betraying an evident design of disguise) were noticed, tracked, and hunted, while expectation stood on tip-toe, and hearts beat high with mingled hope and fear.

Sir Roland was especially hopeful on this occasion, and avowed his resolve of having the malefactors (when caught) publicly shot in the market-place.

In those days flying criminals could not be tripped up by telegrams, but had to be stalked from one hiding-place to another, like wary game by the sportsman. Hope, too, in such cases, died a more lingering death, since resources were not so quickly exhausted.

But at length, in Becklington, hope languished and grew sickly; for the two suspicious persons turned out to be two highly respectable travellers for a Scotch house of business, and the suspicious packages proved to contain samples of various kinds of merchandise.

As for the "evident designs of disguise" attributed to one of the suspected persons, they proved to comprise in all a tied-up head, to cover an aching tooth and a swelled cheek.

Shortly after this ignominious failure on the part of avenging justice, the

sufferers from the sin of some person or persons unknown (and who appeared likely to remain unknown) began to gather themselves together, to breast the waves of misfortune with what courage they could muster, and not a few took up their burden manfully, entering upon the task of "beginning life over again" with creditable energy and determination.

Among these, of those in whom our interest centres, Farmer Dale and Amos Callender, the tanner, were pre-eminent; so much so that, when ten years had passed by, not only was "the lass com'ly," well done by, and looked upon as "a likely wench, and one as wouldna come empty-handed to the man as got her," but that boy of Farmer Dale's, the destined "scholard" of the family, had fulfilled that high destiny to the full; and turned out, besides, as steady a man as his father, always crossing the plank over the brook at the bottom of the garden in perfect security of balance, on his return to the parent nest.

Both these worthy men, each in his walk in life, had been aided by thrifty, cheerful-minded, contented wives, which perhaps accounts not a little for the brave hearts they kept in adversity and their success in the evening of life.

Nor had time and trouble dealt hardly with Nance and Bess. Both were still hale and hearty; and as for Nance, if she had been like a ripe apple ten years ago, she was only like the same apple ruddier and riper now.

Jake had suffered more at the hands of time; his face had become more wizened, his spiky locks sparser and of a pepper-and-salt hue that was the reverse of becoming. But Jake's heart was still in the right place, and handy to be got at by any who needed help, any who went sorrowfully and were heavy laden.

The windmill still swung its long arms round and round on week-days, and stood as still as a clock that has run down on Sundays. The miller still ground his corn and his tenants, and, like most grasping people, had grown more and more grasping as years whitened his head with a snow that could not be dusted out, like the flour when he put his best clothes on and went to meeting, serenely ignoring the mill.

But those hard and cruel hands of his never clutched Jake's bit of hard-earned money that was destined to pay the widow's double rent. Long ere the month's grace

was up, help arrived from her own kith and kin. The eldest boy had appeared, all breathless with carrying a load of news, at the cobbler's stall, telling his story breathlessly through the open shutters, while Abel the lad lurked around to hear as much as he could.

They were all going away from Beckington for ever and ever, mother and he and the three little ones, and would Mr. Jake please to come up the hill as quick as he could?

So Jake went, with rather a heavy heart in his breast though. We all love our own charitable deeds, and do not like to see them plucked out of our hands by another; and Jake had grown very tender over the little hoard which he had been laying by, shilling by shilling, in an old stocking, to pay the extortionate landlord. He was a lonely kind of a chap was Jake, and he had "taken to" the widow and her children, and fancied they might get quite fond of him in time, and let him go and take a friendly dish of tea up there in the circling shadow of the big mill now and again when the day's work was done. And now a rich sister of Mrs. Bunycastle's was altering the whole state of matters.

Jake felt very sad the day he went to see them all off by the coach to London, and when the youngest child of all clasped him round the leg, and lisped out: "Doo-bye, de—ar Mr. Soo-maker," his eyes grew dim, so he nearly shook hands with the boy Abel—who had helped to carry the baggage, and stood delightedly grinning near—instead of with Mrs. Bunycastle.

Then Jake set off towards home, muttering to himself of life and its vicissitudes.

"It's just as full of partings as an egg's full of meat, and sorrows are so fond of each other they like to come hand-in-hand. Don't you be thinking you're frizzled, Jake, and t' wusts over when you're on'y bein' buttered and got ready for t' pan. What wi' t' bank robbery, and seein' Amos and Bess brought so low, and what wi' Maister Devenant makin' away wi' hisself, I thought things wur that bad they'd need tak' to mendin', and now here's these little 'uns gone, and it's little they'll think o' poor old Jake when they get their bellies full o' jam tarts every day, instead o' whites and agen, when the little cobbler brings 'em i' a paper-bag."

All these things happened a long while ago now, and Jake has never heard of the widow and her children; so may be that reflection of his as to the forgetfulness that

is born of absence and prosperity had some truth in it.

These changes that affect the minor characters of our story having thus been chronicled, we must catch up the stronger and more conspicuous threads.

What of Hester Devenant in the passing of the years?

Strange things indeed.

We left her in all the first anguish of her cruel widowhood, defiant of her own sorrow, yet consumed by it as by a burning fire.

Time, that softens and heals all healthy grief, neither softened nor chastened hers. Beckington matrons were not gratified by seeing Mrs. Devenant's magnificent coils of hair covered by a decent widow's cap; indeed, she hardly could be said to wear mourning garb at all. Her attire had always been of the plainest and simplest, and so remained, yet without pretension to any show of grief. But the grey came quickly, silvering the ripples of her hair, the lines in her face deepened, her eyes were deeply sunken in her head—watchful, restless, sinister.

What once had been her husband was buried—according to the modified and more merciful law—at dead of night, behind the old church in the meadow; the rooks in the trees above cawing sleepily and hoarsely as the little procession passed beneath, as who should ask what strange weird obsequies were being solemnised at such an hour.

And all alone, with none but little Hilda by her side—Hilda silent and wonder-struck to see mon camarade laid so low—the desolate widow followed her dead. The heavy thud of the earth upon the coffin broke the quiet of the night, hushed voices whispered, stealthy footsteps rustled in the long, frank grass among the graves—but no sound of a woman's sob, no moan of a woman's pain, mingled with these.

Tearless as she had been from the first hour of her bereavement, Hester turned from that open grave, where lay the one only love of her life. Any lingering softness or tenderness that had existed in her heart seemed to be buried there with Gabriel. The very men who were busy about the necessary offices for the dead, shrank from her as she passed, so white, so fixed, so terrible looked her passionless, unshrouded face, in the grey light of a cloud-wrapped moon.

She dragged rather than led Hilda home, the poor little one whose sobs almost choked her as she thought of mon camarade

left all alone in the dark and the cold, hidden away where his petite reine could never find him more.

What will they do, said Becklington, that widow and child? Their little hoard is gone, swept away with the rest; surely they will be very poor. True, Mrs. Devenant can make lace almost as fine as a spider's web, and to see the bobbins dance and spin upon the cushion as her hands touch them, ever so lightly, is a sight to make one blink again. But lace-making is a precarious and uncertain trade. The poor woman will find a great change. True, sorrow may be of service to her, may break down her wicked pride, and school her hard tongue to softer words.

It did nothing of the kind, as those who were bold enough to try and break through the crust of her reserve, found to their cost. She was as silent, as defiant, as self-contained as ever.

Nor were eyes dazzled by the sight of the bobbins flying beneath her cunning touch, each adding its fairy quota to a dainty web.

She lived much as heretofore for a time. Perhaps, said Becklington, being thrifty, she had laid by a secret hoard, and now, like the bears in winter, was living on her own fatness. But curiosity was shortly almost stifled by fear. The north-country people are superstitious, and when it began to be whispered about that Hester Devenant had been seen at nightfall wandering among the dykes like a restless spirit—wandering beside the deepest dyke of all, that living tomb from which she had drawn a ghastly prey—it was borne in upon many that there was something uncanny about Gabriel's widow, and had she chanced to live a century sooner, who may say but she might have been burned for a witch?

Suddenly, about three months after Gabriel's death, it was bruited abroad that Mrs. Devenant was going to leave Becklington—that the little house among the dykes was in an upset, its few goods and chattels being handed over to a broker; and almost before this rumour had crept through the town, Mrs. Devenant was gone.

As she left no friends behind her, no one knew whither she had betaken herself; and perhaps Farmer Dale's was the only voice raised in pity and sorrow for the lonely silent widow and the "bonnie little wench wi' t' curly yare an' t' bonnie bright eyes."

Five years later the White House—then long tenantless—was reported to be let. The flower-beds that Jeremy Bindwhistle had once tended, or rather let go their own way in the matter of "making posies of themselves," were got into something like order. The old oaken staircase, where still the goblins gibed and moved, and the one elf that little Ralph had loved the best, and always touched with a loving hand in passing, still smiled a goblin smile, was once more trodden by many feet. The casement that had opened as Gabriel Devenant flitted like a shadow among the shadows of the trees was set back on its stanchion, so that the fresh sweet air of heaven might freshen the long closed room.

The banks of the river that ran swiftly by the gateway behind the house were gay with golden iris, and tall tapering spires of foxglove; the garden was ablaze with roses, and gilly-flowers, and crimson-tasselled fuchsias, when the new tenant came to take possession, "for a term of years," as rumour had it.

And Becklington held its breath as one man, and gave a mighty universal gasp of wild amaze, for the new tenant of the White House was none other than Gabriel Devenant's widow, and the slender bright-eyed girl, reaching nearly to her mother's shoulder, none other than his daughter Hilda.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXVII. VICTORIA STREET.

LOUNGING in an armchair in a small but luxuriously furnished room in Victoria Street sat Captain Mountjoy Scarborough, and opposite to him, equally comfortably placed as far as externals were concerned, but without any of that lounging look which the captain affected, sat his brother. It was nearly eight o'clock, and the sound of the dinner plates could be heard through the open doors from the next room. It was evident, or at any rate was the fact, that Augustus found his brother's presence a bore, and as evident that the captain intended to disregard the dissatisfaction evinced by the owner of the chambers. "Do shut the door, Mountjoy," said the younger. "I don't suppose we want the servant to hear everything that we say."

"He's welcome for me," said Mountjoy, without moving. Then Augustus got up and banged the door. "Don't be angry because I sometimes forget that I am no longer considered to be your elder brother," said Mountjoy.

"Bother about elder brothers. I suppose you can shut a door."

"A man is sometimes compelled by circumstances to think whether he can or not. I'd've shut the door for you readily enough the other day. I don't know that I can now. Ain't we going to have some dinner? It's eight o'clock."

"I suppose they'll get dinner for you—I'm not going to dine here." The two men were both dressed, and after this they remained silent for the next five minutes. Then the servant came in and said that dinner was ready.

All this happened in December. It

must be explained that the captain had come to London at his brother's instance, and was there, in his rooms, at his invitation. Indeed, we may say that he had come at his brother's command. Augustus had during the last few months taken upon himself to direct the captain's movements, and though he had not always been obeyed, still, upon the whole, his purposes had been carried out as well as he could expect. He had offered to supply the money necessary for the captain's tour, and had absolutely sent a servant to accompany the traveller. When the traveller had won money at Monaco he had been unruly, but this had not happened very often. When we last saw him he had expressed his intention to Mr. Hart of making a return journey to the Caucasian provinces. But he got no further than Genoa on his way to the Caucasus, and then, when he found that Mr. Hart was not at his back, he turned round and went back to Monte Carlo. Monte Carlo, of all places on the world's surface, had now charms for him. There was no longer a club open to him, either in London or Paris, at which he could win or lose one hundred pounds. At Monte Carlo he could still do so readily; and, to do so, need not sink down into any peculiarly low depth of social gathering. At Monte Carlo the ennui of the day was made to disappear. At Monte Carlo he could lie in bed till eleven and then play till dinner time. At Monte Carlo there was always someone who would drink a glass of wine with him without enquiring too closely as to his antecedents. He had begun by winning a large sum of money. He had got some sums from his brother, and when at last he was summoned home he was penniless. Had his pocket been still full of money it may be doubted whether he would have come, although he

understood perfectly the importance of the matter on which he had been recalled.

He had been sent for in order that he might receive from Mr. Grey a clear statement of what it was intended to do in reference to the payment of money to the creditors. Mr. Grey had, in the first place, endeavoured to assure him that his co-operation was in no respect made necessary by the true circumstances of the case, but in order to satisfy the doubts of certain persons. The money to be paid was the joint property of his father and his brother,—of his father, as far as the use of it for his life was concerned, and of his brother as to its continued and perpetual enjoyment. They were willing to pay so much for the redemption of the bonds given by him, the captain. As far as these bonds were concerned the captain would thus be a free man. There could be no doubt that nothing but benefit was intended for him,—as though he were himself the heir. "Though as to that I have no hesitation in telling you that you will at your father's death have no right to a shilling of the property." The captain had said that he was quite willing, and had signed the deed. He was glad that these bonds should be recovered so cheaply. But as to the property,—and here he spoke with much spirit to Mr. Grey,—it was his purpose at his father's death to endeavour to regain his position. He would never believe, he said, that his mother was—— Then he turned away, and, in spite of all that had come and gone, Mr. Grey respected him.

But he had signed the deed, and the necessity for his presence was over. What should his brother do with him now? He could not keep him concealed,—or not concealed,—in his rooms. But something must be done. Some mode of living must be invented for him. Abroad! Augustus said to himself,—and to Septimus Jones who was his confidential friend,—that Mountjoy must live "abroad."

"Oh yes; he must go abroad. There's no doubt about that. It's the only place for him." So spoke Septimus Jones, who, though confidential friend, was not admitted to the post of confidential adviser. Augustus liked to have a depositary for his resolutions, but would admit no advice. And Septimus Jones had become so much his creature that he had to obey him in all things.

We are apt to think that a man may be disposed of by being made to go abroad;

or, if he is absolutely penniless and useless, by being sent to the Colonies,—that he may there become a shepherd and drink himself out of the world. To kill the man, so that he may be no longer a nuisance, is perhaps the chief object in both cases. But it was not easy to get the captain to go abroad, unless, indeed, he was sent back to Monte Carlo. Some Monte Carlo, such as a club might be with stakes practically unlimited, was the first desire of his heart. But behind that or together with it, was an anxious longing to remain near Tretton and "see it out," as he called it, when his father should die. His father must die very shortly, and he would like "to see it out," as he told Mr. Grey; and, with this wish, there was a longing also for the company of Florence Mountjoy. He used to tell himself, in those moments of sad thoughts—thoughts serious as well as sad, which will come even to a gambler—that if he could have Tretton and Florence Mountjoy he would never touch another card. And there was present to him an assurance that his aunt, Mrs. Mountjoy, would still be on his side. If he could talk over his circumstances with Mrs. Mountjoy, he thought that he might be encouraged to recover his position as an English gentleman. His debts at the club had already been paid, and he had met on the sly a former friend who had given him some hope that he might be re-admitted. But at the present moment his mind turned to Brussels. He had learned that Florence and her mother were at the embassy there, and, though he hesitated still, he desired to go. But this was not the "abroad" contemplated by Augustus. Augustus did not think it well that his father's bastard son, who had been turned out of a London club for not paying his card-debts, and had then disappeared in a mysterious way for six months, should show himself at the British Embassy, and there claim admittance and relationship. Nor was he anxious that his brother should see Florence Mountjoy. He had suggested a prolonged tour in South America, which he had declared to be the most interesting country in the world. "I think I had rather go to Brussels." Mountjoy had answered gallantly, keeping his seat in the armchair and picking his teeth the while. This occurred on the evening before that on which we found them just now. On the morning of that day Mountjoy had had his interview with Mr. Grey.

Augustus had declared that he intended to dine out. This he had said in disgust at his brother's behaviour. No doubt he could get his dinner at ten minutes' notice. He had not been expelled from his club. But he had ordered the dinner on that day with a view to eat it himself, and in effect he carried out his purpose. The captain got up, thinking to go alone when the dinner was announced, but expressed himself gratified when his brother said that he "had changed his mind." "You made yourself such an ass about shutting the door that I resolved to leave you to yourself. But come along." And he accompanied the captain into the other room.

A very pretty little dinner was prepared—quite such as one loving friend might give to another when means are sufficient,—such a dinner as the heir of Tretton might have given to his younger brother. The champagne was excellent, and the bottle of Léoville. Mountjoy partook of all the good things with much gusto, thinking all the while that he ought to have been giving the dinner to his younger brother. When that conversation had sprung up about going to Brussels or South America, Mountjoy had suggested a loan. "I'll pay your fare to Rio, and give you an order on a banker there." Mountjoy had replied that that would not at all suit his purpose. Then Augustus had felt that it would be almost better to send his brother even to Brussels than to keep him concealed in London. He had been there now for three or four days, and, even in respect of his maintenance, had become a burden. The pretty little dinners had to be found every day, and were eaten by the captain alone, when left alone, without an attempt at an apology on his part. Augustus had begun with some intention of exhibiting his mode of life. He would let his brother know what it was to be the heir of Tretton. No doubt he did assume all the outward glitter of his position, expecting to fill his brother's heart with envy. But Mountjoy had seen and understood it all, and remembering the days, not long removed, when he had been the heir, he bethought himself that he had never shown off before his brother. And he was determined to express no gratitude or thankfulness. He would go on eating the little dinners, exactly as though they had been furnished by himself. It certainly was dull. There was no occupation for him, and in the

matter of pocket-money he was lamentably ill supplied. But he was gradually becoming used to face the streets again, and had already entered the shops of one or two of his old tradesmen. He had had quite a confidential conversation with his bootmaker, and had ordered three or four new pairs of boots. Nobody could tell how the question of the property would be decided till his father should have died. His father had treated him most cruelly, and he would only wait for his death. He could assure the bootmaker that when that time came he should look for his rights. He knew that there was a suspicion abroad that he was in a conspiracy with his father and brother to cheat his creditors. No such thing. He himself was cheated. He pledged himself to the bootmaker that, to the best of his belief, his father was robbing him, and that he would undoubtedly assert his right to the Tretton property as soon as the breath should be out of his father's body. The truth of what he told the bootmaker he certainly did believe. There was some little garnishing added to his tale, which, perhaps, under the circumstances was to be forgiven. The blow had come upon him so suddenly, he said, that he was not able even to pay his card account, and had left town in dismay at the mine which had been exploded under his feet. The bootmaker believed him so far that he undertook to supply his orders.

When the dinner had been eaten, the two brothers lit their cigars and drew to the fire. "There must unfortunately come an end to this, you know," said Augustus.

"I certainly can't stand it much longer," said Mountjoy.

"You, at any rate, have had the best of it. I have endeavoured to make my little crib comfortable for you."

"The grub is good, and the wine. There's no doubt about that. Somebody says somewhere that nobody can live upon bread alone. That includes the whole menu, I suppose."

"What do you suggest to do with yourself?"

"You said, go abroad."

"So I did,—to Rio."

"Rio is a long way off;—somewhere across the equator, isn't it?"

"I believe it is."

"I think we'd better have it out clearly between us, Augustus. It won't suit me to be at Rio Janeiro when our father dies."

"What difference will his death make to you?"

"A father's death generally does make a difference to his eldest son,—particularly if there is any property concerned."

"You mean to say that you intend to dispute the circumstances of your birth?"

"Dispute them! Do you think that I will allow such a thing to be said of my mother without disputing it? Do you suppose that I will give up my claim to one of the finest properties in England without disputing it?"

"Then I had better stop the payment of that money, and let the gentlemen know that you mean to raise the question on their behalf."

"That's your affair. The arrangement is a very good one for me; but you made it."

"You know very well that your present threat means nothing. Ask Mr. Grey. You can trust him."

"But I can't trust him. After having being so wickedly deceived by my own father, I can trust no one. Why did not Mr. Grey find it out before, if it be true? I give you my word, Augustus, the lawyers will have to fight it out before you will be allowed to take possession."

"And yet you do not scruple to come and live here at my cost."

"Not in the least. At whose cost can I live with less scruple than at yours? You, at any rate, have not robbed our mother of her good name as my father has done. The only one of the family with whom I could not stay is the governor. I could not sit at the table with a man who has so disgraced himself."

"Upon my word I am very much obliged to you for the honour you do me."

"That's my feeling. The chance of the game and his villainy have given you for the moment the possession of the good things. They are all mine by rights."

"Cards have had nothing to do with it."

"Yes;—they have. But they have had nothing to do with my being the eldest legitimate son of my father. The cards have been against me, but they have not affected my mother. Then there came the blow from the governor, and where was I to look for my bread but to you? I suppose if the truth be known you get the money from the governor."

"Of course I do. But not for your maintenance."

"On what does he suppose that I have been living since last June? It mayn't be in the bond, but I suppose he has made allowance for my maintenance. Do you mean to say that I am not to have bread and cheese out of Tretton?"

"If I were to turn you out of these rooms you'd find it very difficult to get it."

"I don't think you'll do that."

"I'm not so sure."

"You're meditating it;—are you? I shouldn't go just at present, because I have not got a sovereign in the world. I was going to speak to you about money. You must let me have some."

"Upon my word, I like your impudence."

"What the devil am I to do? The governor has asked me to go down to Tretton, and I can't go without a five-pound note in my pocket."

"The governor has asked you to Tretton!"

"Why not? I got a letter from him this morning." Then Augustus asked to see the letter, but Mountjoy refused to show it. From this there arose angry words, and Augustus told his brother that he did not believe him. "Not believe me! You do believe me! You know that what I say is the truth. He has asked me with all his usual soft soap. But I have refused to go. I told him that I could not go to the house of one who had injured my mother so seriously."

All that Mountjoy said as to the proposed visit to Tretton was true. The squire had written to him without mentioning the name of Augustus, and had told him that, for the present, Tretton would be the best home for him. "I will do what I can to make you happy; but you will not see a card," the squire had said. It was not the want of cards which prevented Mountjoy; but a feeling on his part that for the future there could be nothing but war between him and his father. It was out of the question that he should accept his father's hospitality without telling him of his intention, and he did not know his father well enough to feel that such a declaration would not affect him at all. He had therefore declined.

Then Harry Anneasley's name was mentioned. "I think I've done for that fellow" said Augustus.

"What have you done?"

"I've cooked his goose. In the first place his uncle has stopped his allowance, and in the second place the old fellow is going to marry a wife. At any rate, he

has quarrelled with Master Harry & outrance. Master Harry has gone back to the parental parsonage, and is there eating the bread of affliction and drinking the waters of poverty. Flossy Mountjoy may marry him if she pleases. A girl may marry a man now without leave from anybody. But if she does, my dear cousin will have nothing to eat."

"And you have done this?"

"Alone, I did it, boy."

"Then it's an infernal shame. What harm had he ever done you? For me I had some ground of quarrel with him; but for you there was none."

"I have my own quarrel with him also."

"I quarrelled with him,—with a cause. I do not care if I quarrel with him again. He shall never marry Florence Mountjoy if I can help it. But to rob a fellow of his property I think a very shabby thing." Then Augustus got up and walked out of the chambers into the street, and Mountjoy soon followed him.

"I must make him understand that he must leave this at once," said Augustus to himself, "and if necessary I must order the supplies to be cut off."

ON ETIQUETTE.

BOOKS on etiquette have a real value. To the newly accredited explorer in the terra-incognita of society they are as essential as a good guide-book to the inexperienced Continental traveller. They are useful also to those who, living in retirement, have not kept pace with the manners of their time, a difficult thing to do when what is "the thing" of to-day is the bêtise of to-morrow.

Manners are formed by intercourse with society, character by solitude. "Etiquette may be considered as the bye-laws of civilisation, binding upon each individual of the community, a community the members of which are not all equally civilised, some being rough by nature, others by training or rather lack of training." (Sensible Etiquette, by Mrs. H. O. Ward, Philadelphia.) These bye-laws may seem arbitrary, but as there can be no peace without accord it is necessary to have a code to which all are willing to subscribe.

A gentleman has been defined as "a man with the strength of manhood, combined with the delicacy of womanhood." A man may have an innate gentleness which will

make him presentable in society, but he cannot be expected to know by intuition the ever varying laws by which his habits are governed, and the breach of which is so unpardonable. Let those who underrate the observance of punctilio in good manners read Emerson, who tells us that manners recommend, prepare, and draw people together; that in clubs manners make the members, that they make the fortune of the ambitious youth, adding: "When we think what keys they are, and what secrets, what high lessons and inspiring tokens of character they convey, and what divination is required in us for the reading of this fine telegraph—we see what range this subject has, and what relations to convenience, form, and beauty." The same writer tells us that the maxim of courts is power. "A calm and resolute bearing, a polished speech, an embellishment of trifles, and the art of hiding all uncomfortable feelings, are essential to the courtier," who bends willingly to the yoke of a rigid etiquette. Lord Chesterfield declared good breeding to be "the result of much good sense, more good-nature, and a little self-denial for the sake of others, and with a view to obtain the same indulgence from them." Good sense and good-nature suggest civility in general, but in good breeding there are a thousand little delicacies which are established only by custom, and if, as Aristotle says, "Manners are the lesser morals of life," it is necessary to subject them to informing laws. But "there is a delicacy of heart as well as of good breeding," and, to quote Lord Chesterfield again: "A man who does not solidly establish a character for truth, probity, good manners, and good morals, at his first setting out in the world, may impose and skim like a meteor for a very short time, but will very soon vanish and be extinguished with contempt." No observances, however minute, can be considered trivial, if they tend to spare the feelings of others, and "politeness, which is but another name for general amiability, will oil the creaking wheels of life more effectually than any of those unguents supplied by mere wealth and station." Miss Burney, in her novel *Evelina*, says "I think there ought to be a book of the laws and customs, à la mode, presented to young people upon their introduction into public company;" but the want indicated by that martyr to an inexorable court etiquette, and equally felt in even our own day of more flexible observance, has been

amply met by numerous works, dealing with the subject in all its minutiae and ramifications. The higher the civilisation of a community the more careful it is to preserve the elegance of its social forms, so the code which rules English society, is strict and comprehensive in detail. But manner, which is as much a part of the man as his voice, can never be taught, though like the voice it can, if naturally brusque or angular, be modulated by art.

The bow, that "touchstone of good breeding," says a French writer, has undergone strange mutation since the obsequious days of the Georges. Now the body must not be bent, only the head inclined, cordially or otherwise, according to circumstances; genuflexions are relegated to dancing and posture masters, whose palmy days are now a record of the past. In the time of the Merrie Monarch the plumed and jewelled hat was doffed with a sweeping grace to the very ground, and there held until the lady so saluted had passed or retired. Now the hat is simply raised in recognition of a fair acquaintance, who must give the initiative by a slight inclination of the head, and we are informed, by an aristocratic authority on matters of etiquette, that "a gentleman returning the bow of a lady with whom he is but slightly acquainted would do so with a deferential air," but if there were an intimacy he would raise his hat with greater freedom of action, "and considerably higher." In France it is the gentleman who bows first, and there, too, the bow is the signal of recognition between members of the sterner sex; in England a nod suffices. The two most polite—in the old-fashioned sense of the word—of our kings, Charles II. and George IV., took off their hats to the meanest of their subjects.

A lady's obeisance to royalty, fifty years ago, was an acrobatic feat. The knees were bent and the body slowly brought forward in graceful and reverent guise, the equilibrium being recovered by a backward movement very difficult to perform with ease. But our monarchy waxes old, and republican manners, assertive of independence, make high-flown courtesy ridiculous; now a curtsy to royalty is merely a deep dip, a sudden collapse as if on springs, and as sudden a reattainment of the perpendicular.

Many a now obsolete nicety of civility had a feudal origin, as the taking off the glove on shaking hands with a lady. A

knight would bare his hand of the iron gauntlet, the pressure of which might have hurt the fair palm he clasped—now the glove is retained and no solecism committed. And, too, the blowing a kiss to a familiar acquaintance in the distance may be traced to the ancient Greek custom of saluting, *en passant*, the statues of the gods in a similar fashion. The modes of salutation are characteristic of peoples. The Frenchman bows profoundly and asks how you carry yourself; the German how goes it with you. The Spaniard bids God be with you, bending low, or asks how you stand. The Neapolitan piously desires you to "grow in holiness," and the Greek to act successfully.

Outside the European cordon the modes of salutation are eccentric, but equally expressive; the Turks, perhaps, have the most dignified—a simple folding of the arms on the breast and a simultaneous bend of the body. The Egyptian wishes to know if you have perspired, a dry skin being a sure sign of a destructive ephemeral fever; and the Chinese, joining their hands on their breasts, move them affectedly, bowing the head slightly, and ask if you have eaten; but etiquette among the Chinese is a science and its bibliography voluminous. The Oriental leaves his shoes at your door, and the Ethiopian takes his friend's robe and ties it round his own body, leaving his friend naked. In Southern Africa it is the thing to rub toes, in Lapland to rub noses. The Moor of Morocco has a way all his own. He rides his horse at a gallop at a stranger, pulls up under his very nose, and fires a pistol over his head. The Arab of the desert shakes hands six or eight times; those of low degree kiss vigorously.

Hand-shaking is British. The Lounger in Society, in his Glass of Fashion, enumerates its various styles as indicative of character. These are aggressive, supercilious, lymphatic, imperative, suspicious, sympathetic, emotional, but none of these are required by etiquette. Still to shake, or rather take, or give a hand, in mere conventional greeting, is a cultivated art of society.

A gentleman cannot take a lady's hand unless she offers it, and an American authority on etiquette reminds him that he must not "pinch or retain it." A young lady must not offer hers first, or shake that given her, unless she is the gentleman's friend. A lady should always rise to give her hand, and in her own house she should

always offer it in greeting strangers and friends alike. In the ball-room, however, hand-shaking is not the thing. It is also the privilege of the superior to be the first to proffer the hand. An American is chary of his hand; in these progressive times a nod is considered sufficient, except in conservative Virginia and the South generally, where family traditions of old, courtly, and kindly observances still obtain.

The etiquette of visiting in the cosmopolitan society of London is complex and full of pitfalls. We are admonished that visits should always be brief, and that first visits should be returned at the latest within three days. Royalty pays such debts on the same day they are contracted. If on a wet day we cannot command a vehicle, we are to withdraw our foot from our friend's house—to enter a room with mud-bespattered shoes is a *bêtise*. A decade ago the Countess of —, in her obliging instructions on etiquette, uttered the dictum that unless you were a person of consideration it would be presumption on your part to set aside a day in each week to receive visitors; but that is all altered nowadays, and in the season almost every lady has her day at home, a modern convenience, sensible and conducive to sociability.

The ramifications of card-leaving are too numerous to detail. Cards emanated from the French, but they use them in a less complex fashion than that which is followed by us. Formerly visiting-cards were left by a footman, who on the arrival of his mistress in town made his round to the houses on her visiting-list. This custom has been abandoned, and now all cards must be left in person. We are told that the card must be thin, without glaze, and three and a half inches in width by two and a half in depth. A temporary address must be written, not printed. A husband and wife must never have their names printed on the same cards, while, on the other hand, a young lady must not have one for her special use; she must be entered below the maternal name. The inner significance of cards is a study to be thoroughly understood by the idle busybodies of society only; to outsiders or mere transient members of gay circles they are a blank. Only the initiated can tell which end to turn down, when the card ought merely to be doubled, or if it be necessary to bend down more than one corner; also how many it is proper to leave

under given conditions. But this, as well as all other matters pertaining to the "vast and vague" mystery of cards and card-leaving, is it not written in the book of eclectic observance.

The Americans have no established code of etiquette, though of late years they have produced several books on the subject. The want of a fixed society, and a fixed national type, is one cause. An Englishman will under certain circumstances always do certain things, so also will a Frenchman, but not so an American; therefore in American society there are "constant misapprehensions and misunderstandings, rudenesses suspected when none are intended, and sometimes resented to the great perplexity of the unintentional offender," so says a writer in Harper's Magazine for March, 1878. De Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, observes that nothing is more prejudicial to democracy than its outward forms of behaviour. "Many men," he goes on to say, "would willingly endure its vices, who cannot support its manners." Though the manners of European aristocracies do not constitute virtue, they sometimes embellish virtue itself. Laws of etiquette which do not support the dignity of the individual, and the convenience and the comfort of the community, are senseless laws. "What sort of a country is America?" said a young diplomat to an older going home. "It is a country," was the reply, "where every one who chooses can tread upon your toes, but then they give you the same privilege, only you are too polite to take it." To be forced to be on the *qui vive* for rudenesses does not conduce to equanimity of spirit. It is like Thomas Carlyle and the Shanghai cock. "He doesn't crow all the time," said the former, "perhaps he doesn't crow very often, but I never know when he will crow, and I am always afraid he is going to." Many of the best American women who have travelled much in Europe, avoid fashionable society in their own country, because of the uncertainty of its code of manners. An American gentleman called on a distinguished French general in Paris, more than twice his age. To his amazement the call was returned the same day. In his own country no notice at all would most probably have been taken of a similar visit.

There seems a strange contrariety in the Washington and New York rules of etiquette. In the Empire city it is the lady who bows first, not so in Washington,

or in the exclusive circles of Virginia, nor among the members of the oldest families, and men who feel secure of their position in society—so at least says an authority on American manners. Among these the French custom obtains which ordains the bow to be given at the instant of recognition without hesitation. There is also, between these several sections of American society, a yet unsettled controversy as to which is the proper arm to give a lady. New York stands alone in decreeing the right as the most respectful. The left arm, she says, "is too tender;" but New York is not regarded as the ultimate authority on matters of etiquette.

Another knotty point among the rival communities is the order to be observed in escorting a lady downstairs, supposing the stairs to be too narrow for two to go abreast. New York says it is a matter of etiquette that everyone descends a man-of-war before the commander; but if a gentleman goes first it may be better, is the considerate prevision, as the lady may have large feet, or thick ankles, or "some other reason" for wishing to protect her lower extremities from observation. Washington decrees that the lady takes precedence, the gentleman following close behind to guard her from misadventure.

In New York it is not "the thing" for a lady to say "thank you" for small courtesies, such as passing change in an omnibus, restoring fallen umbrellas, etc.; only a smile is allowable. There has been a difference of opinion, too, on the use of capital letters for P. P. C. on visiting-cards, and R. S. V. P. on cards of invitation. Since the time of the Romans large letters have been used for abbreviations, but America now uses small letters, an innovation distasteful to European eyes. There, too, it was rigid etiquette—as, indeed, it was until quite late years in this country also—to send invitations and answers by hand; now, if at any distance, the medium of the post is permissible. In England the formula of introductions is severely simple: "Mr. Brown—Mrs. Smith," that is all. Mr. Brown may be Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mrs. Smith the wife of the Archbishop of York, but these facts are not named. In America, etiquette requires dignities and official status to be particularised, as "the Rev., Mr., or Dr. Blank, or the Hon. Governor Dash," adding the name of the state he governs. If a member of congress, the fact must

be added; if an author of repute the names of his principal works must be stated.

It is customary in America for a lady to be accompanied to a ball by a gentleman as an escort. His duty is to see that she is provided with partners and refreshments, and to look after her generally. He carries, indeed supplies, her bouquet, and attends her on her return home. A young English nobleman on his first visit to Washington called on a prominent member of society, and tendered letters of introduction. The lady received him frankly, and introduced to him her three daughters. A ball coming off the same evening, she offered to procure him an invitation. On his accepting she desired him to choose one of her daughters as a companion for the entertainment. He did so. It was then arranged that he should call for the young lady in a carriage of his own providing, and bring the usual bouquet, which he did. At the conclusion of the ball he accompanied his charge home. The rest of the family had retired for the night, but servants were in waiting, and his fair companion pressed him to enter and join her in a cup of coffee. Not a little surprised the gentleman assented, and spent a pleasant half-hour in the drawing-room alone with his entertainer, discussing the dance he had enjoyed in her society. Republican independence of manners perhaps, but innocent withal. "He was a gentleman," said the mother afterwards, "accredited to me by mutual friends, and I knew that my daughter could take care of herself." This incident was no outrage on American etiquette. In America it is the custom for the young ladies of the family to give the balls, and it is not at all necessary that you should be introduced to their parents.

Courtesy to women is a noticeable feature of American society, yet a writer in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin has uttered the heresy that "no man who has not travelled has seen a woman."

What may be termed "knife and fork" etiquette in refined circles of American society, differs little from our own at the present time; but not so very long ago, instead of the finger-glasses now in general use, a large silver bowl used to be handed round for general ablutement. At the time Thackeray visited America, things were a degree rougher. "I saw," said the satirist, "five Americans at a time with their knives down their throats. I said to my daughter: 'My dear, your great-great-grandmother, the finest

old lady I ever knew, also applied cold steel to her vittles, but I wish five at a time wouldn't." But the rules of a kindly etiquette are essentially the same in all circles of refinement. Dr. Holland says that the cure of gossip is culture, and gossip in an open way is bad form in society. A single bit of gossip in circulation, stamped with your name, will excite general distrust and doubt as to your fidelity.

Zimmerman tells us that to entertain and benefit readers, authors must deliver freely in writing that which in the general intercourse of society it would be impossible to say with either safety or politeness. They may decompose the state of their own minds, he adds, and make observation on their own characters for the benefit of other men, rather than leave their bodies by will to professors of anatomy. In society a man feels truth, but he is not always called to speak what he feels. Society teaches the service Antisthenes claimed to have received from philosophy, it teaches us to subdue ourselves. Conversation is a reflex of character. That in society should never degenerate to persons, or personal matters. The faculty of listening with interest ought to be cultivated, repression is wholesome at times. Society teaches us to check our impulses, conceal our dislikes, and even modify our likings whenever and wherever they are liable to pain others, therefore it is needful in general company to avoid personal topics. For the same reason restrain your wit; to outshine others is unamiable. Avoid religion and politics, and the obtrusive "I." Preserve an equal temperament. Ask no questions—questions, as a rule, are solecisms—and never give a confidence unsought, or proffer advice. Avoid flattery; it is vulgar and a liberty. If a gentleman, be careful not to lower your intellectual standard of conversation in addressing ladies, but compliment them by supposing them to be of equal understanding with the sterner sex; in nine cases out of ten you will not be wrong. Even if you do not at the moment remember the name of a person claiming your acquaintance, conceal your lapse of memory if possible. It is held to be a royal faculty that of keeping faces and names in mind, but the ready chamberlain or courtier is generally at hand to whisper a reminder in royalty's ear, and so preserve a royal personage's reputation for a gracious memory. Even a smile has an art. Never smile broadly, it gives a

vacuous expression, but always smile with the eyes. Be of certain mind in trifles. It is clumsy to be undecided and deprecatory in small things; and bear in mind that there can be no more unpardonable rudeness than unpunctuality—to be thoughtless is to be vulgar. Never enter into explanations concerning those you do not wish to invite; by so doing you give up your rights, and (to quote the Rev. F. W. Robertson) "explanations are bad things." Besides all this, dress well; no one can afford to dress badly. And, finally, though in minor and extraneous matters of social procedure, necessary and arbitrary in themselves, books on etiquette will be found instructive and useful, do not so much trust to such works as to your own observation, which will better inform you how to look, speak, and act with correctness and proper self-respect, for "manners are not idle, but the fruit of noble nature and of loyal mind."

HOME FROM EGYPT.

NINE stout and sturdy policemen as fellow-travellers, all in stout and roomy great-coats, and belted with shipy leather-belts, all with "special duty" expressed by their equipments, to say nothing of the stern sense of the same written on their steadfast faces, these not tuneless but surely trustworthy nine, produce in the only non-official passenger a feeling as if he were a prisoner of desperately bad antecedents on his way to some metropolitan prison. And, indeed, the compartment of the railway carriage might very well represent some cellular conveyance in the way of a prison van, with the gloom and obscurity in which we travel. Outside is a thick white fog—it was white in the country, anyhow, where every twig and blade of grass was coated thick with silvery rime, while the soft white mist drove across the pale and watery disc of the sun, but, as London closes around us, a yellow-murky gloom envelops everything. Nor does the fog mean to lift, but rather to deepen as the day wears on, thus pronouncing the oldest and most experienced member of the force. The prospect of London in a fog, while vast crowds—in which the rough and dangerous element will not be wanting—are in full possession of the leading thoroughfares, is not altogether a pleasant prospect. The police do not seem to mind it, but then they are an organised

body, capable of taking care of themselves, while they are not likely to be much of a protection to anybody else. That the business of lining the streets through which our little Egyptian army is to pass is likely to prove a cold one, everybody is agreed upon, as everybody stamps his feet on the boards, and rubs his hands energetically. One remarks to a comrade with a wink that he had rather be walking about Number Seven, whence we may conclude that Number Seven has a pleasant cook and an extensive kitchen-range.

Presently the nine policemen arrive at their destination, and their numbers seem to swell to nine times nine at least, as they tramp noisily up the stairs. A little further and Charing Cross is reached, and then we plunge among the wastes of new streets and hoardings without guide or compass, an adventurous undertaking. All is a void, with the voices of people sounding mysteriously in the air. "It will be put off," says a solemn voice from out the fog. But how to put off the swarms of people from the east who will be presently on their way to the review? And then the troops are arriving. A drum and fife band rattles in a muffled way from out the fog, and some regiment goes by, invisible except for a little darkening of the misty veil. The crowd which collects in a moment, the rush of people to follow the soldiers, carries one along till all sense of locality is lost, and it is not until the stream divides against a lofty pedestal and the head of a bronze lion is observed peering over at the creatures of the mouse kind below, that the world assumes its proper bearings. For at that moment there is a change; touches pale and bright gleam through the mist; here appears a dome, and there the summits of lofty houses, with flags and banners displayed, while a glimpse of sunshine lights upon the hero of the Nile, who from his lofty pillar seems to be on the look-out for these other heroes of the Nile, in whose honour all the world is to turn out to-day.

And thus all along Pall Mall, although the distance is lost in haze, yet there is a sense of light and cheerfulness. The roadway crowded with vehicles, people hurrying to and fro, and ever and again collecting in knots to stare at the caparisoned chargers standing by the military club houses, or the mounting of some stout veteran who has cast aside the paletot and umbrella to be once more gorgeous in scarlet and gold, and aiguillette and plumes. But prettiest

scene of all, a gleam of pale sunshine at the corner of St. James's Street, with the quaint red brick of the homely palace that still figures in diplomatic language as the seat of the Court, the sound of a military trumpet and the dancing plumes and glittering steel of a squadron of Life Guards, passing down the hill in the sunlight, and winding under the shadowed archway of the palace.

All along St. James's Street and Piccadilly there are hasty notes of preparation for the coming pageant, preparations left to the last moment in view of the uncertainty of meteorological arrangements; railings boarded up and converted into temporary stands; windows stripped of engravings and jewellery to be filled with bright-eyed young women, who are seen to advantage at full length from the tops of their spreading hats to the toes of their coquettish boots. Before the carpenters have finished their work, while yet the red baizé is only half nailed up, the guests are arriving, and peering curiously into the crowded streets, where hansoms, ambulances, Life Guards, generals, and costermongers are mixed up in part-coloured and picturesque confusion. Nothing can be more pleasant than to drift to and fro with the moving crowd, marching here and there wherever the bright martial music may lead us. Now to the Horse Guards, where the mist still hangs thickly, clinging to the damp grass of the park and the course of the ornamental waters, while the streets are already pretty clear of it, as the Seaforth Highlanders swing past with the glitter of steel and the tramp of many feet, the band playing some gay Scotch air that makes the lookers-on instinctively mark time; or up to Birdcage Walk, where the Guards are turning out of barracks with the tow-row-row of British Grenadiers. And when the troops have all filed in, and the spectacular people are safely engaged in their respective stands, a sort of hush begins as the wheeled traffic is stopped—such a hush as people who remain outside a church may have noticed when the bells have ceased to ring and the organ to play, and in this hush the voices of the crowd suddenly make themselves heard, a confused and agitated murmur, as at sea when tide and wind are struggling together.

The scene that is going on within the enclosure, where Royalty reviews the little army in isolated state, is fine, no doubt,

and perhaps historic. We can't tell, indeed, in what perspective the deeds of to-day may appear in time to come. They may be dwarfed by other more momentous events, or remain in relief upon the records of a level unexciting cycle. Veterans recall the kindred pageant at the end of the Crimean War—a celebration of a more open and popular character. But many things have changed since then; a new set of performers are on the stage, and the war that was once thought to mark an epoch in European history has very much shrunk in general estimation. But whatever may have changed since then, it is quite evident that the British army has rather gained than lost in popularity and general esteem. From every side people are flocking to do it honour, and the universal impression seems to be that the men have deserved so well of their country that there is a personal obligation on everybody to give them the heartiest reception possible.

As time goes on, the crowds on the march become stationary, clustering and crystallising on the lines of route—now a thin single rank of spectators patiently lining the kerbs, then ranks four or five deep—while, as the supreme moment approaches, the last flow of circulation ceases, and the crowd settles itself in a compact mass from Piccadilly to Westminster, while in Trafalgar Square there is one vast amphitheatre of human faces, with clusters rising out of the mass and clinging to every point of vantage, while vehicles that have drifted there and stopped are covered with people. From this crowd strange hoarse roars and bellows issue, as if from some wild animal; and no doubt it contains a good deal of the rough and dangerous element, not numerically very great when compared with the great mass of honest, decent folk, but formidable as animated by a common purpose of disorder and confusion. Happily the fog has cleared away, and the power for evil of the congregated gaol-birds is thus limited.

Here we have come to a final jam, and are, one would think, as closely packed as possible; but two or three pushing fellows, slimy and ill-favoured, with the sallow expressionless faces of professional thieves, the cunning of the serpent blended with the slipperiness of the eel, insinuate themselves in crevices, and manage to crawl to the front.

On these occasions it is always the

postman who comes in for an ovation—the mail-cart which drives along just before the appearance of the hero of the day. And then, with the sound of martial music in the air, rides forth Sir Garnet, as everybody calls him still, brown and wiry, and yet not so well known to Londoners as one would think he ought to be from the photographs and portraits which appear everywhere. Anyhow, the greeting of the crowd was restrained by doubts as to whether this were the real man or no—doubts rather fostered by the general etiquette of processions when the most important personage appears last. But the familiar Life Guards—spruced and burnished up since they first rode through London in tatterdemalion array—as they came along with the ring and clatter of military accoutrements, are deservedly popular favourites, a favour that is mingled with a certain amount of pity. "Pore fellows! look at their clothes! Ain't they lost a few pounds!" And, indeed, the rolls of wrinkled cloth about their arms and shoulders, where once all fitted like a glove, seem to indicate a woeful falling-off in flesh. But the men look fit and well, with the soldier-like assured air of those who have made their proofs, as when at Kassassin; they, Paladin-like, rode through a host in gathering darkness.

Lean, too, and gaunt look the men of the Royal Irish, while a hoarse, hectic-looking man beside us, shouts till he becomes, if possible, more hoarse and hectic still, "Well done, Fourth!" And the Fourth did well, the gallant light-hearted dragoons, as they rode all alone through the long hot day, to capture a city that fell like Jericho at the sound of their trumpets; that ancient and famous city, Cairo, that has seen in all its long Arabian Nights' adventures, no bolder deed of arms than that. As for the gunners, with their polished death-dealing tubes, and in all their trim and workmanlike array, the crowd has a hearty appreciation of all their good services, against heavier metal, and the most formidable arm of the adverse forces. It was those dashing Horse Artillery, who will take guns wherever a horse can find footing—it was they, surely, who drove their guns right through the bristling lines of Tel el Kebir. We make much of the marine gunners, too, who stuck to their guns so manfully when, at Kassassin, the enemy were swarming up, and threatening to swamp the little army corps opposed to

them, by sheer force of numbers. The Guards, too, in their magnificent solid ranks, are heartily welcomed, and the balconies all blossom out in white cambrics at the young prince who rides at their head, in his ribbon of garter-blue.

With the cavalcade of Indian warriors came the culminating interest of the parade. The big white turbans, the other strange oriental headgears, the variegated robes, and scarlet breeches, with the brown martial faces, fierce curled moustachios, and gleaming eyes, with the white teeth that showed in such amused wonder at the seething, struggling crowds, and their strange familiar greeting. Here are specimens of every race, of tribes that would be now engaged in cutting each other's throats, if we had not retained them to do the same service by our enemies—holy Brahmins, who eat our bread, but would sooner die than touch a slice of our beef; strict sons of Islam; and others of mixed races and indefinite faith; but all brethren of the sword, true soldiers of fortune, at once a strength and a danger to those who own their allegiance. Surely, nothing like this has been in the civilised world since the days of Roman triumphs, when natives of every clime swelled the procession as allies or captives. If we can imagine Arabi brought along in chains, to have his head struck off in the Tower dungeons afterwards, the idea would be more completely realised.

But such is the tolerant culture of the Londoner, that probably were Arabi really here he would be the most popular man in the procession. One hears many regrets at his absence. "Yes, and Cetewayo! he should be among 'em, too," cries an enthusiast at our side.

One wonders in turn what kind of an impression we have made upon these strangers—what the name of England will recall to these men, and what they will have to tell their comrades when once more among them. Probably, that England, judging from Wimbledon, is a barren country covered with heath and furze, with one great city in it, where everybody goes for the day, and where most of the people do nothing but run about and shout a welcome to strangers. At midnight, the city is shut up, and everybody goes away to sleep in his own house among the furze.

But this is hardly a time for such speculations. As the marines come by at the head of the line brigades, there is a

general roar of congratulations. The more volatile part of the crowd is wonderfully well informed upon the matter—knows what every regiment has done, and apporitions out its meed of applause with very just discrimination. Individually, one would not, perhaps, attach much importance to their opinions. The profession of loafing about after public shows and sights in general, seems hardly profitable in a pecuniary sense, even when combined, as it occasionally is, with a little picking and stealing on private account—but no doubt it gives a readiness of speech and quickness of apprehension which more steadily disposed people may envy. It is these clever but unsuccessful people who are the real mouthpieces of a crowd; they know everything and everybody, the facings of the regiments, even the men and the wonderful titles they have lately had conferred upon them. "Well done, Manchester!" "Bravo, Sixty-thirds!" with a memory for new and old that is really quite wonderful. And, after all, these bronzed and seasoned men, with their white pith-helmets, moving along with the easy stride of war-seasoned men, are not a realisation of the popular idea of Manchester men. And why should Sir Evelyn Wood be such a favourite among the people? He deserves his popularity, no doubt, but how is it that his merits are so peculiarly appreciated? witness the roar of welcome that follows him all along the line. Perhaps the Seaforth Highlanders—"Seventy-second, well done you!" cries the hectic man opportunely at this moment—perhaps the old Seventy-second hardly gets its fair share of honour, till the colours come by, ragged and tattered, when at this manifest proof of the danger they had passed through, the public voice flows out loud and strong.

"Old bullet-proofs!" shouts out our hectic friend again, as the Eighty-fourth go by as one man; and after them, the Irish Fusiliers, in their modified bearskins, with "Fog a bally, well-done!" hoarsely, with an imperfect pronunciation of Irish, and as if with his last breath, from the hectic man. However, after this, the latter feels his mission accomplished, for the transport and commissariat naturally do not excite much enthusiasm—their work being of the practical and useful order. But the end of the defile is the signal for a serious rush. Already the crowd had broken through all barriers of police and volunteers at Charing Cross, and now the street was

filled with a surging multitude carrying all before it; and, with the triumph of the roughs, all the congenial elements in the general crowd awoke to mischievous activity. There was a bad quarter of an hour then for women; and their screams and cries, the mingled roar of the various contending columns of exultant roughs, terrified people who only wanted to be safely out of it all. With the fog still lowering above, and darkness threatening to close in all round, there was a scene of terror and confusion, the usual finale to all public pageants, but which need not necessarily be so one would think.

NO MORE.

To meet no more.

I hoped that seal was set upon the past.

I hoped that you and I had looked our last,
Till life was o'er.

Not, oh my friend,

That you can stir one quiet pulse of mine,

No words can ever join the broken line.

Time traced "the end."

Not that my name

Can bid your heart one instant faster beat;

No fair old folly blind youth found so sweet,

Such power can claim.

The girlish dream

Passed, as the morning mist will roll away,

When on its fairy veil of sweeping grey,

Full sunlights gleam.

But in its reign,

Foolish although it was, and false, and brief,

Came many an idle hour of baseless grief,

Came many a pain.

Its charm has fled,

But round it hangs the memory of its woe,

Jarring the sweet notes of the long ago,

To heart and head.

Therefore I say,

I fain had left unturned the silly page.

I fain had left untouched the dust of age

To gather grey,

And thick, and fast

Upon the coffer of the faded flowers,

We plucked and flung away in those wild

hours,

Whose spell has passed.

In calm content,

Blest in our sobered joys, apart we stand.

I want no spectre from the shadow land,

Of fancies spent.

And so I say,

Smooth be your path, your sky from

cloudlets free!

But let life's river roll 'twixt you and me,

E'en as to-day.

A CABINET SECRET.

A STORY.

I MADE Robert Headley's acquaintance in the auction-room. I am an idle man, and having plenty of time, and occasionally a few pounds to spare, have gradually contracted a love for bric-à-brac. the

pursuit of which enables me to kill a good many weary hours and to hoard up, in the shape of old china, money which otherwise would be frittered away on equally useless but less valuable objects.

Headley and I were among the most regular attendants at Christie's, Sotheby's, and other auction-rooms, and, as during the season of the sales we met somewhere almost daily, our mutual taste soon led to an acquaintance.

Headley was a tall gentlemanly man of about thirty-eight, and, evidently, had studied the ceramic art deeply. He put me right on several little matters, and once or twice saved me from buying spurious productions. As the true collector loves nothing better than to show his pet objects to another who understands and appreciates their beauties, it was not long before Headley asked me to pay him a visit for that purpose.

"Come early," he said; "then we shall have time to go through the cabinets by daylight. Afterwards I will give you some dinner."

Headley's house was in a quiet square in a good, if not the most fashionable, part of London. I found my host delighted to see me, and panting to show his treasures. He was a genuine member of that species known as "the enthusiastic collector," whose passion for accumulating rarities amounts almost to a mania; and I am bound to say that his collection was one to be proud of. I should tire the reader, ignorant of those delicate distinctive subtleties dear to a collector's heart, were I to expatiate upon the beauties of his old Dresden, Sèvres, Wedgwood and Bentley, rose-backed Nankin, blue-and-white hawthorn pattern, etc., etc. I admired greatly, and envied more.

The collections were arranged with great taste, in suitable cabinets; and among the many choice specimens, I think the one that struck me most was a magnificent old Chelsea tea-set. It occupied the centre of one of the cabinets, with articles of lesser value ranged around it, as though paying homage to its superior worth. Leaving out of the question the beautiful blue and white decoration, the reticulated gilding and the artistic painting, the set was very valuable from the fact that it was perfect.

Headley seemed pleased at the admiration I expressed, and said, with a smile:

"You, a collector, may not be surprised

at hearing that I nearly bartered my happiness to make that set perfect."

I laughed, thinking he was joking, and replied :

"I don't think I would go quite as far as that; but I am sure my happiness would be greater if I owned it."

"So would any man's be. Look at the painting, the gilding, the shape, the colour. Feel the texture of it," he added, taking the teapot from its velvet-lined nest, and fondly caressing it with his long white fingers; "you or I could tell in the dark it was Chelsea by the softness of the paste."

"Where did you get it from?"

"I had the teapot, sugar-basin, two cups and saucers first. They belonged to my mother, and, as I told you, I was nearly paying too dearly for the rest of it. But I will tell you all about it after dinner if you would care to hear the story."

The summer afternoon passed very pleasantly among the old china, and at seven o'clock we were summoned to the dinner-table.

I was presented to Mrs. Headley, a charming young woman of about twenty-eight. She gave me a cordial welcome, and the little dinner went merrily enough. We were served on old Oriental plates; the spoons and salt-cellars were of the coveted Queen Anne period, and the glass was rare old Venetian. Headley certainly had refined and expensive tastes, and, it seemed, plenty of means wherewith to gratify them.

When Mrs. Headley rose she begged us, pleasantly, not to linger too long over the wine, as she was all alone.

"Your husband has promised me the history of the Chelsea set," I said, "but under the circumstances, I shall ask him to be as brief as possible."

"If he does tell you, Mr. Burke," she said, laughing, "I shall never, never forgive him, and it would be impossible for me to look you in the face again."

"My dear," said Headley, "our friend Burke is a collector himself, and can sympathise with my weakness. I should never think of relating it, unless it were to a kindred spirit who will fully enter into my feelings."

After closing the door upon my fair hostess, I refilled my beautifully-tinted glass with Lafitte, and waited, with some curiosity, for the promised recital.

Headley commenced :

"Of course it is all a joke now, and I

can well afford to laugh at it, but when the affair I am going to tell you of happened it was serious enough. The portion of the Chelsea set I owned at first belonged to my mother; she inherited it from her father, and there its history is lost. When I was first seized with the passion for collecting, it naturally formed the nucleus of my cabinet. Everyone admired it, and envied me the possession of it. One day—it was after I had formed a decent collection and was getting well known as a buyer—Wharton, the dealer, called upon me to show me a few things he had picked up in the country. I drew his attention to my Chelsea; he examined it closely, and said: 'Very strange; I saw the rest of that service a few days ago.' I asked him where, and he told me it belonged to a lady living at Shepherd's Bush. Was it for sale? Certainly not, or he would not have told me about it until he had secured it. He had offered to give her a large sum for it, but nothing would induce her to part with it. It was, like mine, a family relic, and as the owner was in no want of money, there did not seem to be any chance of persuading her to surrender it. Her name, he informed me, was Miss Crofton; her residence, 142, College Road, Shepherd's Bush.

"Now, Burke, you will, I know, sympathise with me when I say that, having discovered that the rest of that exquisite set was in existence, I felt that life was almost intolerable without it, and that at any sacrifice it must be mine. On that point my mind was at once made up.

"The first thing was to see the china, and satisfy myself that Wharton had made no mistake; so the next day I called upon Miss Crofton. I found her a pleasant, polite lady of about fifty, and she presented the appearance of a spinster whose circumstances were very comfortable. It has always seemed to me that anything to do with china makes the whole world kin, and when I explained the object of my call, Miss Crofton refused to listen to any apology, but at once led me to the cabinet holding the treasure. My informant had told the simple truth. I had the teapot, two cups and saucers, and the sugar-basin; whilst Miss Crofton was the fortunate owner of the cream-jug, four cups and saucers, and the two dishes. And as, with dazzled eyes, I gazed on her portion of that exquisite service, I felt as though a sacred duty had devolved upon me to

reunite the long-separated ceramic family ; and I knew I should find little happiness until all the beautiful members of it reposed safely in my possession.

"Miss Crofton and I soon became good friends, especially when upon comparing notes and tracing back the pedigree of the Chelsea, we decided that at some time my mother's and her father's families must have been closely allied. When we had established this fact to our satisfaction, I ventured to hint, as delicately as I could, my wish to possess the china ; then, as she took no notice of my hints, I was compelled at last to ask her, point blank, if she would sell it to me, fixing any price in reason she chose to. I found, as Wharton predicted, that the good lady was obdurate, and there I sat for an hour, with the coveted articles almost within grasp, yet as far off as the gates of heaven.

"I did not of course despair entirely. 'I must manœuvre,' I thought. 'I will have it in time, by fair means or foul. I will make myself very agreeable to her ; I will show her attentions. Some day I may be able to render her a service, and her heart may open with gratitude, and I shall compass my desire.' To-day I could do no more, so I bade my new-found relative, as I cunningly called her, an affectionate good-bye, asking permission to call on her again.

" 'I shall be glad to see you at any time, Mr. Headley,' she said ; 'but we shall never have any china dealings together, so you are fairly warned.'

"I went home feeling very mournful, and for the rest of that day the four cups and saucers, the cream-jug, and the two dishes were dancing about before my eyes. I sat down for an hour or more with my own portion before me. How meagre it looked now ! I took the pieces out and re-arranged the cabinet, leaving blank spaces for those I coveted. I pictured the lovely appearance the set would present, when the whole of it was in my hands.

"I went to rest quite sorrowful, and the cabinet, which only the morning before seemed so well filled, was now empty, or nearly empty, in my eyes. It is a small thing to say that I believe I dreamt of Miss Crofton and her china the whole night. My honesty vanished as my eyes closed. I stole that china at least a dozen times. I secreted it in the most extraordinary places. I buried it for safety and to avoid detection, but the four cups

seemed endowed with life, and as fast as I covered them up with earth, would pop up in unexpected places. I committed other crimes for the sake of that china. I deliberately murdered the unfortunate spinster, and packed the articles which had urged me to crime most carefully in a bag. Then the hue and cry was raised, and I knew that men were pursuing me, but I dare not venture to run, lest I should break those fragile things for which I had endangered my soul. It seemed to me infinitely preferable to swing on the gallows than to find one of those exquisite cups in atoms. Even when the morning came, and I found that the events of the night were only dreams, my state was not very much happier. I could not bear to look at my cabinet. Something was wanting there, and until the void I had created was properly filled, I felt I could find no pleasure in my former pursuits.

"You, although a collector, may think I am joking, but I assure you I am not. I hungered, I craved for that china, and felt that, were it denied me, my dreams might some day almost come true.

"After the interval of a few days, I thought I might venture to call upon Miss Crofton once more. She received me kindly, told me she was flattered by my paying her another visit so soon, and allowed me to handle the china again. I must have been dull company too, for although I replied mechanically to her chit-chat, my eyes were ever turning to those four cups and saucers, cream-jug, and two dishes. Miss Crofton could see the bent of my thoughts, for she said :

" 'It's no use, Mr. Headley. I will not sell them, and I love them too much to give away.'

"As she spoke a thought struck me. I would take her to see the tea-pot, sugar-basin, and the other cups and saucers, mourning as it were for their long lost brethren. So I concealed my vexation, and making an effort to smile, said :

" 'I am only admiring, Miss Crofton. But I should be so pleased if you would honour me by calling and looking at my little collection. If so, I will send the carriage for you to-morrow.'

"She accepted my invitation, and the next day came to my house. I took care to have a choice little repast prepared, of such things as middle-aged spinsters love, and after we had discussed it I led her to the room which held my treasures. All

the cabinets save one were open to her view, but that one I had covered with a dark cloth. After she had seen the contents of the others, I led her before this one, and in a theatrical manner, with a beating heart, lifted the veil and revealed my tea-pot, sugar-basin, cups and saucers, looking beautiful, but sorrowful, with the vacant spaces around them. I said nothing, thinking this mute appeal to her better feelings would do more than any words of mine. She saw the plot at a glance, and laughed long and loud, saying, as her merriment subsided :

“So, Mr. Headley, this is the meaning of your hospitality ; you expect me to pay for my dinner with the china ?”

“I protested it was only a little hint to show her how very anxious I was to possess the remainder of the set, and then I told her, seriously, how necessary it was to my happiness and peace of mind to see those void spaces filled.

“No appeal of mine would soften her, and the four cups and saucers, the cream-jug, and the two dishes, seemed as far away as ever. At last she said decisively :

“As you are so bent upon it, I will bequeath the china to you.”

“And I may have to wait twenty years for it,” I said sulkily, forgetting, in my mortification, not only politeness, but the affection I had expressed for my new-found relative.

“A good deal longer, I hope,” she replied. “But as you are so anxious, why not pack up what you have and let me take it back with me ? You can see it all in my cabinet whenever you like ; and I dare say its being there will give me the pleasure of your company more often.”

“But this plan did not suit me at all ; and finding that my device had failed utterly, I was obliged to conduct my visitor to her home in a frame of mind not the sweetest.

“A week went by ; but, try how I would, I could not get that cursed china out of my head, or resign myself to the disappointment. I found myself growing worse instead of better, and, as I fancied my health was beginning to suffer, I determined to run down to Brighton in the hope of distraction. The weather was fine ; I met several pleasant friends there ; and after a day or two began to think that in time I might conquer the absurd craving for what could not be mine. But even as I was congratulating myself on the partial recovery

of my senses, I dreamed a dream so horrible, that I fell back into my former unhealthy state of mind. I dreamed that Miss Crofton’s maid—a red-cheeked, rough-fingered lass—had broken two of the cups. I saw her do it ; and suffered agonies from the sight ; also, to make matters worse, she put the precious fragments (which might have been cemented) in her dust-pan, with the intention of throwing them away. I really think the greatest feeling of pleasure I had known for many days was to awake and find it was only a dream.

“I hurried back to town the same day. I felt I could endure the uncertainty, the anxiety, no longer ; and that to obtain my desire, any sacrifice I could make must be made ; so—don’t laugh too much—I was resolved, upon my return, to ask Miss Crofton to become Mrs. Headley ; and then upon the day of our marriage the severed set would be reunited. True, she must be somewhere about fifty ; whilst I was just thirty ; but from what I had seen of her, I believed she was a very worthy woman ; and, anyway, the china would be mine.

“You will scarcely credit it, but I carried out my resolution. Two days later I was at the fair spinster’s side, beseeching her to be my wife. I could not bring myself to profess a sudden passion for her ; but I told her I was tired of living alone, and asked her to share my lot. I said I was well-to-do in the world, and promised to try and make her future life a happy one ; and as, whilst speaking, my eyes rested on the four cups and saucers, the cream-jug, and the two dishes, I no doubt pleaded with a show of fervour which must have considerably puzzled the good lady. Like a sensible woman she expressed the greatest astonishment.

“Let me understand you clearly,” she said. “Do you mean to say you are in love with me ?”

“I will make you a good husband,” I replied, thinking as I spoke how beautifully modelled the handle of the cream-jug was ; “and I am sure you will never regret accepting my offer.”

“But do you really love me ?” she persisted, “an old woman as I am ?”

“Seventeen hundred and sixty,” I said mentally, “that must be about the date it was made ;” and then I answered, looking at the four cups and saucers, and thinking of the vacant spaces at home : “I esteem and respect you highly, dear Miss Crofton,

and I am sure you will make a solitary home cheerful.'

"'Suppose,' said Miss Crofton acutely, 'I were to take the poker and demolish that china; would you still repeat these flattering assurances of affection?'

"'Oh, please don't!' I cried, starting up as the horrors of my dream came back to me.

"'Mr. Headley,' she said gravely, 'you will pardon me saying so, but sometimes I am afraid you are not quite right in the head. Is there any insanity in your family?'

"'None at all,' I replied.

"'Neither your father, nor mother, nor any aunt nor uncle shown any tendency that way?'

"'Not the slightest.'

"'Very well; you had better go home now, and think quietly over what you have said to me. If, to-morrow, you wish to repeat your words, you will find me at home all the afternoon.'

"I left her, and as I stepped out congratulated myself that she had not accepted me at once.

"'What a fool I am!' I said. 'I shall always esteem that woman for not taking advantage of me. I will write and beg her pardon for my silly conduct and trust she will still continue my friend. And yet, in spite of these praiseworthy resolutions, the sight of the vacant spaces sent all my good sense to the winds; and, to shorten the tale, I went, deliberately, the next afternoon, to Shepherd's Bush, renewed my offer, and left the house formally betrothed to Miss Lesbia Crofton. She, at least, behaved in a very sensible manner.

"'You say you wish to marry me,' she said, 'and I am getting on in years now, so cannot, in justice to myself, refuse such an offer. I have enquired about you, and everyone who knows you speaks in your favour. Still, you may regret your choice, so you shall have plenty of time for consideration. We will not be married for six months, at least.'

"Although, after taking the first plunge, I should have been glad to go to the depths of my folly without delay, I felt the wisdom of her words, and acquiesced in this arrangement. Of course, with the new understanding between us, I saw both her and the china nearly every day; and as Miss Crofton was an extremely nice woman, I may say I grew quite to love her—as a mother—and, had fate not interposed, should doubtless have married her

at the expiration of the time she named, and very probably should have been happy enough after a fashion. One thing was very much to my Lesbia's credit: she indulged in no raptures, nor did she expect any from me. When we met, or parted, I imprinted a kiss upon her forehead, and that was all. She even interdicted the use of christian-names between us, and stipulated that our engagement should be spoken of to no one. Another thing I found strange, was that she was continually harping, in a good-tempered sort of way, upon the disparity of our ages, instead of endeavouring to make the difference as little as possible. In fact, she seemed to treat me more as a son than as a future husband.

"Feelings of delicacy prevented me from asking her to allow me to remove the Chelsea to my house before I had paid the price due for it, and I quite blushed with shame when one day she handed me the key of the cabinet, and with a meaning smile begged I would take charge of it to ensure the safety of the articles I so highly prized.

"The course of our affection ran very smoothly for about three months. I had quite recovered my health, and I may say was placidly happy. If, at times, whilst sitting with my elderly bride-elect, and hearing her, it may be, complain of some ailment which she candidly attributed to advancing years, I did feel a twinge of regret, I had but to turn to the four cups and saucers, the cream-jug, and the two dishes, and it vanished.

"But fate and Miss Crofton had other views for me, although I little suspected them.

"According to custom, one afternoon I paid my usual visit to my future spouse, and was surprised as I entered the house to hear the sound of a piano. I know something of music, so at once became aware that the instrument was played with great skill, and much I wondered who the performer might be. I had not as yet discovered that my Lesbia possessed musical talent. The maid opened the door of the drawing-room, the music ceased, and I walked in and found myself face to face with one of the loveliest girls I had ever met. Perhaps the surprise, the contrast, when I saw her instead of the middle-aged lady I expected to greet, made this stranger look even more charming. I could realise only at first a bright young face, with masses of light hair around it, turned to see who entered, and a well-moulded figure, showing

to great advantage as she sat before the piano. Her dress was of simple black, but well and becomingly made, and as she rose when I entered, I could see she was over middle height.

"Women always behave with less awkwardness than men in chance meetings; so whilst I stood still and stammered some words of apology, she advanced with perfect ease and said:

"Mr. Headley, I am sure! My aunt told me to expect you. She has gone out for a short time, but hoped you would wait until her return."

"I was only too pleased to accept the invitation so frankly given, and recovering my self-possession, in a few minutes was in full swing of chat with my Lesbia's niece.

"I found her an unaffected girl, full of spirits, and looking forward to the pleasures of a stay in town.

"I suppose you will stay some time?" I asked. "Your presence will quite brighten Miss Crofton's house."

"I shall stay as long as ever my aunt will keep me," she replied. "Isn't she a dear old soul, Mr. Headley?"

"I winced, and began to realise that my situation was a painful one.

"She is so antiquated," she continued, 'and yet so romantic in many things.'

"I felt more foolish than ever, and for the sake of saying something remarked:

"I wonder she did not tell me you were coming. I suppose she meant to surprise me."

"I suppose so. But I assure you she has talked to me a great deal about you, Mr. Headley. You appear to be great friends. Quite a flirtation, I tell her."

"I coloured up to my ears, but managed to say:

"Then I conclude her report of me has been favourable."

"I sha'n't betray her confidence, Mr. Headley; and, any way, it would have no weight with me, as I prefer to form my own opinions."

"As I felt we were getting on delicate ground, I begged her to resume the music my coming had cut short.

"She played a piece of Chopin's with great feeling and brilliancy, and then, at my request, sang a couple of ballads. Her voice was sweet and well trained—altogether she was a very charming niece-to-be.

"Do you play or sing?" she asked.

"Neither, unfortunately. I am only

an indifferent critic, who understands music only enough to praise when pleased."

"Ah, I forgot; you are a great china collector."

"And as she spoke it struck me that this was the first time I had ever been inside this room and forgotten to look and assure myself of the safety and well-being of the cups, saucers, cream-jug, and dishes.

"And, as the thought of the china brought other thoughts in its train, I felt that I would give a great deal to know whether Miss Crofton had told her niece everything. Fervently I hoped that she had not done so, as I knew, intuitively, I should cut a sorry figure in a young girl's eyes.

"During my meditation Lesbia returned, and instead of appearing jealous and annoyed at the capital understanding between the fair niece and future uncle, smiled and said:

"Shall I introduce you young people, or have you dispensed with that ceremony?"

"Your niece has the advantage of me in knowing my name," I replied.

"Mr. Robert Headley, let me present you to Miss Ethel Crofton, my favourite niece," said Lesbia with the politeness of the old school.

"After that unnecessary ceremony I shall go and dress for dinner," said Miss Ethel Crofton.

"I closed the door after her, and turned to greet her aunt with the accustomed salute. Perhaps from the same reason that the china had lost its charm to-day, I found that semi-maternal affection was scarcely satisfying enough, and could not help thinking my future bride looked very aged.

"Robert," she said—it was, I believe, the first time she had used my christian-name—"I should much prefer that Ethel should hear nothing of our engagement at present. She is young and giddy, and might not look upon it in the right light."

"I promised secrecy with a joy I could scarcely conceal. At any rate Ethel knew nothing about it as yet.

"I dined that evening with the ladies. Miss Crofton did the honours in a dress of such antiquated design and material that Ethel openly rallied her upon it. She herself was beautiful in pale blue silk, and I was so struck by her fair, young bright face, her pleasant natural manner, that before the evening was half spent I had

fully realised what an ass I had made of myself.

"My visits to Shepherd's Bush, for the next few days, were as frequent as the most exacting fiancée could have expected; but I am afraid that had my Lesbia been of a jealous or suspicious nature she would not have derived the pleasure from them she appeared to feel. I sat no longer in the chair commanding the best view of the cabinet, that enshrined the treasures for which I contemplated sacrificing myself and my affections. I was ever by Ethel's side; at the piano, turning the leaves of the music; reading my favourite poems to her; holding her crewels, or winding wool for her. Considering the tender relations between Miss Crofton and myself I must own that my behaviour towards her unsuspecting niece was disgraceful. Indeed, had Lesbia thought fit to pour a storm of reproach upon me, and order me to quit her presence, she would have been fully justified. However, she did nothing of the kind, but sat in her favourite corner, knitting, and apparently paying no attention to the flirtation, or something more serious, which was proceeding under her very eyes.

"Soon matters reached a climax. I could no longer deceive myself. I was hopelessly in love with Ethel Crofton, and I felt bound in honour to inform her aunt, and to throw myself on the fair spinster's mercy before I made the avowal of my love to Ethel.

"I found Lesbia alone one day, so I took the little key from my waistcoat pocket and handed it to her.

"And what is this for, Robert?" she asked gravely.

"In a shamefaced manner I said:

"I can't marry you—I love Ethel."

"Oh, Robert—Robert!" said Miss Crofton, putting her handkerchief to her eyes; "what can I say to you? Only a month ago I was indispensable to your future happiness; and yet you forsake me for the first young face you see;" and she appeared to sob bitterly.

"It was the china," I expostulated.

"I see; and now you think you can have Ethel and the china too, and prefer a young bride and old china to an old bride and old china. Faithless man!"

"I lost my temper utterly, and I am sorry to say my politeness followed it.

"Hang the china!" I cried; "give me Ethel, and she can smash it all if she likes. I don't care."

"Women, I believe, under such circumstances as these, like to hear a man swear. It shows he is in earnest. Anyway my deposed bride leant back in her chair, and laughed so heartily that I knew matters would be soon arranged to my satisfaction. In great delight I caught her in my arms, and for once gave her a kiss of real affection.

"Did you think I was going to let you marry me for the sake of a few cups and saucers?" she cried; "I am not such a stupid old woman as that. But in truth, Robert, I have grown very fond of you, so if Ethel will have you, take her. But only on conditions."

"Name them, dear Miss Crofton!" I exclaimed; "anything—everything you wish."

"You must prove the earnestness of your love for my darling girl, and the recovery from your insanity, by sending me your Chelsea as a present. I shall then give the whole set to the South Kensington or Jermyn Street Museum."

"I mustn't tell you all about our love-making or Mrs. Headley would never forgive me; but Ethel and I arranged matters very quickly, and upon my return home that evening, I opened my cabinet, and almost without a pang packed my two cups and saucers, tea-pot, and sugar-basin, in cotton wool, and the next morning forwarded them to Miss Crofton. You have seen Ethel, and I dare say you think I did not make a bad exchange."

"I should think not," I said. "But how comes the set to be in your cabinet now?"

"The old lady kept me in great suspense all the time Ethel and I were engaged, and although I hid my feelings, I began soon to think that it would be very nice to have Ethel and the china, but I dared not hint such a thing to Miss Crofton, who, moreover, teased me dreadfully by praising in Ethel's presence my generosity in making her so beautiful a present.

"Whilst on our honeymoon, I thought no more of it—in fact, gave it up for lost; and you may guess my joy when we returned to town to see in my room a strange cabinet with the set as you see it now. So I got a good wife and completed the service as well."

Just then the door opened, and a voice said, with assumed petulance:

"Are you gentlemen never coming? Aunt Lesbia is upstairs, Robert, and wishes to see you before her carriage fetches her."

"Let us go up, Burke," said Headley, as we finished the last of the claret; "and if you want any more particulars of my Chelsea mania, Miss Crofton will give them to you."

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER III. "YIELDING PLACE TO NEW."

AFTER all, there was nothing particularly strange or supernatural in Mrs. Devenant's departure from, and reappearance in, Becklington. The whole matter was quite easy of explanation if anyone had known the circumstances of the case.

But then, nobody did.

So, since putting Hester to the question was an idea not to be entertained by the boldest gossip in the town, conjecture ran riot, and the wildest suppositions were entertained.

The plain truth was this :

After nearly three years of quiet self-centred life—life unbroken by any ripple of change or disturbance, the eventless routine of existence at the cottage among the dykes was stirred by the coming of a foreign letter.

It was addressed to the man who had become long since but a name and a memory. It was written in French, and dated from Paris.

Hester, with Hilda's help, spelt it out by the aid of a dictionary; found it came from an old and eccentric uncle of her husband's, and, by way of answering it, packed up her own and Hilda's personal effects, handed over the furniture to the tender mercies of the broker, paid a solitary farewell visit to the grave behind the church, and set off by mail coach to London.

No one in Becklington had any knowledge of a more extended journey lying before the pair, or tongues would have wagged even quicker than they did, for a journey to France appeared as a desperate kind of undertaking in the eyes of Becklington, and a thing to render memorable the life of which it formed an episode.

Desperate or not, the journey was accomplished in safety, and the travellers received with effusion by a little withered old man, like a dry and sapless branch whose last spring had long become a thing of the past.

Were not this mother and daughter the only relics left to him of "*ce pauvre cher Gabriel*," of whose tragic death he now heard for the first time?

The old man's broken English made Hilda laugh, and then clasp him round the neck as if to heal with the touch of her tender arms the wound she feared to have made in his vanity, while her pretty efforts after fluency in the tongue that had been her father's, yielded such delight to M. Lemaire he had to send for the old servant Babette to share it. Babette (an ancient dame with black teeth, a skin like faded parchment, and a heart as tender as a spring chicken, would clap her hands and cry: "*Mon Dieu, que c'est beau ça!*" But for all these antics Hester had no smile. In soft caress and happy jest she had no part. She dwelt apart in a self-made isolation, her grave reserve calling up some fear in the old man's mind; indeed, he addressed her at times with a trembling chivalry, no doubt looking upon her in the light of a marvellous and terrible production of "*perfidious Albion*."

It presently appeared that the handsome silent widow of "*ce pauvre cher Gabriel*" had a cherished and secret mission to perform, a mission which must be absolutely accomplished before she could know any true repose of mind.

M. Lemaire grasped the position at once—spasmodically indeed. A person with a "*mission*" was naturally different to other people. A person with a mission could not be accounted for. Nothing could be more consistent than that such an individual should wish to go to some indefinite place "*à l'autre bout du monde*." This last remark he made with a sketchy movement of the hands, as indicating a desire on the part of the person with a mission to fly off into space.

The carrying out of such desires necessitated wings. Wings, put practically, meant money. Money was at his dear niece's disposal to any extent; whom had he to think of in this world, save these dear relics of "*ce pauvre cher Gabriel*?"

Had not the disgrace and death of a worthless son caused him to call to mind his nephew Gabriel, the child of his little sister Valérie, the boy so idolised, so wayward, so dear to the heart of the little dark-eyed mother, who died all too soon?

What more sacred duty then was there

for him to fulfil than to help Gabriel's widow to carry out the secret mission that beckoned her to distant realms?

If any one had told M. Lemaire that this generosity of his was in reality selfishness and covetousness masquerading as nobler virtues, he would have been indignant indeed. Yet the truth was that he thought Hester cold and stern to that tender soft-eyed lamb Miss Hilda, and chuckled to himself and rubbed his skinny fingers together in an ecstasy of delight at the idea of the child being given over entirely to himself and old Babette for a time, while Hester should be safe—quite safe, and, he trusted, in a healthy and genial clime—out of the way.

"Have no fear for that petite poulette; give no anxious thought, dear lady, to that petite ange. She shall be safe—safe—safe with old Uncle Lemaire. You shall find her with roses in her cheeks, smiles on her lip, and shining eyes when—ah, the happy day!—you shall return to claim her."

Then the old hypocrite tottered about on feeble shanks, busying himself over the preparations for the carrying out of that secret mission, while Babette laughed, showing her black teeth and clapping her hands, and reading her master's mind as clearly as though it were the mass-book that she knew off by heart.

It was arranged that Hilda should attend the admirable instructions of the good sisters of the Convent of Bon Secours, always, however, remaining what Babette called "*bon hérétique*," as her father had been before her; a programme that was duly carried out, yet not without the fervour and passion of her Catholic surroundings setting their mark upon her, tinging the colder creed with warmth and light, and implanting in her soul a love of the beauty of worship and a sense of the nearness of the unseen world—all influences that helped to make her the woman she became in time yet to come.

Hester was absent a long time. Days, weeks passed by, and the little household of three happy people heard no news of her.

Hilda wondered what her mother was gone in search of. It would have been hard to say how the child had grasped the idea of the "mission" being a search—yet there the conviction was. In truth, she always felt that life itself was one long search to the silent brooding mother whom she

loved so dearly, in spite of the reserve that would fain have held her at arm's-length.

The question that came to her sometimes as she lay awake in the quiet night was: What were they looking for? She could not separate herself from Mothie in this or in anything else. Her father had gone away and left them—just the two of them—to stay always together and never leave each other.

He lay sleeping in the churchyard, with the rooks fluttering black wings and cawing gravely to one another in the tall trees overhead, and Mothie and Hilda had to take care of each other.

That was the way of it.

True, strange memories—broken and disturbing, like the recollection of bad dreams—came over Hilda sometimes: memories of her father's sad and troubled face looking into hers; of his arms holding her so close that they trembled with the pressure—memories of hard words darkening the air like flying missiles, of impulses of pity and—yes—anger rising in her own young heart and having to be stifled there.

As the kiss that betrays is worse than the blow that hurts, so to have jarring thoughts of those nearest and dearest to us is a keener pain than to think ill of all the world besides, and Hilda shrank from these disjointed memories most when most they seemed to take the form of accusations against her mother. She even tried to expiate such musings by little tender acts of love and thoughtfulness, by sweet caresses, not always taken in the spirit in which they were offered, yet bringing comfort and a sense of healing to the child's sensitive heart.

She and Uncle Lemaire had long talks about the dead father, and Hilda told him all about the golden sun-ray which made its way in through the sheeted window, and the bold kitten who played with the ball of worsted when mon camarade lay sleeping so soundly no one could wake him. Sometimes she stopped in her pretty babble, and looked wistful, sighing, and twisting her little hands one in the other; and the old man, sighing too, regretted in his own heart that it would have been disloyal to question the child too closely, and at the same time longed to know more.

Gabriel had not been a happy man. Doubtless that bank robbery, and the consequent loss it entailed, had been the last

straw to break the camel's back, but the load had been piled high before. The dreamy, beauty-loving, idolised boy had become the dreamy artist, charming—"could Valérie's child be otherwise?"—but weak, easily made miserable, given to brood over troubles instead of shaking them off. Also, there were few women in the world like the wife he himself had laid to rest in Père-la-Chaise long years ago—and might it not be that the superbly-handsome Hester had been a difficult woman to live with, as flesh of one's flesh, and bone of one's bone? A tigress was a beautiful creature, but a man might not like to have such a one for ever beside his hearth—bah! he was an old man, but he knew the world, and the beau sexe too!

There were women in the world whose beauty made a man mad, drunk "as with new wine;" then, his eyes being dazzled as those of one who has looked too long at the sun, he cannot read the signs of mind and character which are only visible to calm observation, he buys his idol at any cost, sets it on a pedestal ever so high, and then—loud is the crash with which it falls, endless are the fragments with which he finds himself surrounded as he stands amid the ruins of his hopes and his life.

But Hilda, ah! the gem, the pearl, the flower, will she not shed a tender fadeless lustre on the life of some man—"un des ces beaux jours"? It will be a veritable "beau jour" that day too, a day that will never know any darker night than the sweet radiance of moonlight and the calm refulgence of starshine.

Seeing her master smile and mutter to himself, Babette laughed, well content to see him merry; at which he laughed again.

Altogether the time of Hester's absence passed not unhappily. Hilda prayed each night that le bon Dieu would watch over Mothie, and bring her back safe, and "make her glad to see Hilda once again." A sad tell-tale of a prayer that, and one that made Babette sniff, and call upon one of her many saints. Yet a prayer that was heard; for Mrs. Devenant reached home in due time, keeping an unbroken silence as to where she had been, and making no further allusion to the secret mission than by telling M. Lemaire it was accomplished. For this which gracious dispensation he piously thanked Heaven after the fervent manner of his countrymen, and with the delicate politeness of the cultured of his nation, asked to know no more; a

course of conduct we must emulate, since the time is not yet for the nature of Hester's mission and the motives that prompted her to undertake it to be revealed.

Suffice it to say, that after her return, M. Lemaire thought he detected at times the gleam of a certain fierce joy in her dark eyes, a shade more of haughty defiance in her manner; facts from which he augured ill for someone.

Two years after Mrs. Devenant's safe return from that mysterious journey, undertaken in the cause of the equally mysterious mission, M. Lemaire was taken grievously sick; indeed, it soon became evident that he had one of his poor little spindle-shanks in the grave, and was drawing the other after it.

Thus, a second time came the sorrow of a great loss into Hilda's life, for all her years still numbered so few.

She saw her uncle's withered face grow smaller and more withered still, like a fading leaf; she heard Babette wailing like a banshee and praying like a female St. Simon Stylites, urging upon Heaven her many fasts, her charitable acts, her endless candles given to the altar of St. Joseph from her youth upwards, asking in return for all these holy deeds only the restoration to health of her dear master. She saw her mother, quiet, helpful, capable, doing more work in the sick-room in ten minutes than tearful trembling Babette could achieve in an hour. She saw the curé mount the narrow polished stairs, bearing the last consolations of the Church to the dying man. She saw a tiny weasened old man, with a bag in his hand and his mouth pursed up as if he feared someone might ask him a question he could not answer, steal on tip-toe into the sick-chamber, closing the door after him as if he dreaded secrets oozing through any chink that might be unwarily left open, and Babette told her (still weeping, and mingling broken odds and ends of prayers with her tears) that that "estimable monsieur" was the admirable notary of the street next but one.

A few days after this, Hilda was sent for to go and take leave of the old man, for the sands of life were running fast away, and the words he spoke were getting fewer and fainter.

Babette, by this time in a very crisis of prayers and tears, knelt in the passage outside her master's room, and as Hilda passed, caught her hand and mumbled it

"Go to him," she sobbed. "You have been his sunshine. Go!"

So Hilda went.

She trembled, but not with fear; rather with sorrow restrained.

What, indeed, was there to fear in that extended figure, that wasted face, on which rested a placid smile?

Hilda knew that death was nigh at hand, yet that he did not fear it; knew that the crucifix hanging opposite his bed told of the sure and certain ground upon which his hope was stayed. She bent to kiss him, and at the touch of her lips his eyes unclosed, his cold hand groped for hers.

"I have waited for you long—you have come to me at last—Marie."

He was speaking of his dead wife, and in the utterance of those tender words of greeting, he died.

It was found that M. Lemaire had left all his earthly possessions to Hilda Devenant, "my beloved and precious grand-niece, to be held in trust for her by her mother, Hester, widow of Gabriel Devenant, the son of my dear sister Valérie."

At this news, Babette ceased weeping and praying to clap her hands, and then proceeded as before, to besiege high heaven—this time for the rest and peace of the soul of the departed.

For a time, Mrs. Devenant decided to remain in Paris, so that Hilda might continue under the care of the good sisters of Bon Secours. So year after year passed on, and Hilda grew into a tall and slender maid, with two long plaits of sunny brown hair hanging down her back, and tiny ruffled locks rippling about her brow; with the grave, sweet eyes of the child who had sung at her work in the sunshine, and the sensitive lips that had trembled beneath the last kiss given by mon camarade to his petite reine.

The gentle nuns, whose lives could know no tender grace of motherhood, loved the young English maiden with devotion, teaching her all womanly and graceful arts, leading her passionate love of music into sacred paths, and imbuing her mind with the loveliness of self-abnegation and of a life lived rather to make others happy, than to aim at grasping happiness for ourselves.

In saying that Hester Devenant had left no friend behind her in Becklington, we were, perhaps, hardly stating things fairly. She had left one—the boy Davey; now more man than boy, yet

spoken of as the boy Davey still, from mere force of habit.

Hester, with the ripe and gracious witchery a beautiful woman, many years his senior, can often exert over a youth just entering manhood, had won over Davey to be her friend and henchman. When someone, who is cold to all the world beside, is genial to us alone—when someone, who keeps all others at arm's-length, beckons us alone near, what a sweet spell dwells in smiling lip and clasping hand!

"That which is common to all cannot be looked upon in the light of a thing very precious: but this is a sweet possession, in which no other claims a part. The fruit which has been kept for our hand, and ours alone to pluck, is sweet with a sweetness beyond all words.

During the last years that Hester Devenant had lived at the cottage among the dykes, the boy Davey was often a guest by the ingle-nook where Gabriel once was wont to sit and dream—was often entrusted with the care of Hilda when she went searching for wild flowers among the marsh-lands, or hunting for traces of the sly boggart who milked the cows in the moonlight. Davey constituted himself Hilda's playmate, carving toy-dolls for her out of white wood, as he had carved toy-ships for Master Ralph. Then, when the little one was gone to bed, he would sit and chat with Hester—Hester always busy, stitching, knitting, or plying those marvellous bobbins of hers that flew like tiny shuttles from her hand, while the fairy web of delicate lace grew.

They talked of all things under the sun: but, as the needle to the pole, as the thoughts of a lover to his mistress, Davey's mind had a way of taking one direction, his words of drifting towards one subject, and that one "Mr. Geoffrey."

The boy was naturally enough flattered by Mrs. Devenant's notice; also naturally he took a simple boyish pleasure in watching her as she worked, she being so fair to see, and fairer for him than others, because more gentle; but what drew his passionate heart out to her most of all was her liking to hear of Mr. Geoffrey.

Of course people in Becklington questioned Davey not a little about the tenant of the house among the dykes. Of course, also, they got nothing out of him. Nature occasionally makes a gentleman or two, without the intervention of art; and Davey was a striking example of

this workmanship. However, even this unique friendship of Mrs. Devenant's apparently had its limits, for, when she and Hilda left Becklington, Davey knew no more of her ultimate destination than anyone else; and though his young heart swelled to bursting, and he couldn't see little Hilda's face for tears as he kissed her good-bye, he was too proud to ask for a confidence wilfully withheld.

In course of time Mrs. Devenant wrote to him, asking him to write to her now and then, and tell her how the old place was getting on. But she gave no more definite address than a *poste-restante*, and said no more of Hilda than that "the child was well."

Davey wrote as in duty bound, and his letters, like his talk in the old times, betrayed a strong inclination to stray into the subject of "Mr. Geoffrey."

To judge by the eagerness with which Hester read these letters—read, re-read, and read again every line of them—the subject did not weary her.

At length came one which seemed to contain some item of news that stirred her into new life and energy; and shortly the fiat went forth that Hilda must bid adieu to her dear nuns.

She and her mother were to go back to Becklington.

It has been already told how they entered upon possession of the White House; how the town gaped and the country stared, and Hester Devenant cared for neither.

What changes have the passing years wrought in her?

Time has changed her hair in colour, but in nothing else. It is soft and abundant as ever, but silver-white, ruffling and curling about her brow like a girl's, bringing out in wonderful relief the deep-set black eyes that watch the world from beneath clearly defined and level brows.

Her form is slenderer than of yore; as if the restless spirit within had worn it away;

but all the old grace of movement is there, and her hands have grown white and fair, "like a lady's," says Becklington with a shrug.

A square coif of black lace rests upon her snowy locks; her dress is simple as ever, but richer in material.

"Mrs. Devenant thinks she is quite the lady nowadays—though lord knows where she's got the money from to do it on!—and has no mind to remember as there's them i' this town as has seen her white-stone her own doorstep," said one; and so, speaking, had no faintest conception of the in-born gentle womanhood that is ashamed of no honest work, and can never—in whatever caste or class it may be found—be less than a thing true and complete.

As to Hilda the most stupendous ideas were promulgated.

She could embroider (so said Rumour) so that one might fancy some one had just flung the flowers down upon the satin and left them there; she could speak French just as easily as the rooks in the old rookery could caw; while as for singing, it was a fine thing to pass by the White House when the window was set back and the wind blowing up from the river, for you could hear her like a bird in a tree in pairing-time, and the piano-music trickling from her finger-ends at the same time.

All the same, she had been taught all these fine things by a pack of wicked heathen nuns; and was doubtless herself a Papist at heart.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. THE SCARBOROUGH CORRESPONDENCE.

It was as Mountjoy had said. The squire had written to him a letter, inviting him to Tretton, and telling him that it would be the best home for him till death should have put Tretton into other hands. Mountjoy had thought the matter over, sitting in the easy-chair in his brother's room, and had at last declined the invitation. As his letter was emblematic of the man, it may be as well to give it to the reader :

"MY DEAR FATHER,—I don't think it will suit me to go down to Tretton at present. I don't mind the cards, and I don't doubt that you would make it better than this place. But, to tell the truth, I don't believe a word of what you have told to the world about my mother, and some of these days I mean to have it out with Augustus. I shall not sit quietly by and see Tretton taken out of my mouth. Therefore I think I had better not go to Tretton.—Yours truly,

"MOUNTJOY SCARBOROUGH."

This had not at all surprised the father, and had not in the least angered him. He rather liked his son for standing up for his mother, and was by no means offended at the expression of his son's incredulity. But what was there in the prospect of a future lawsuit to prevent his son coming to Tretton? There need be no word spoken as to the property. Tretton would be infinitely more comfortable than those rooms in Victoria Street, and he was aware that the hospitality of Victoria Street would not be given in an ungrudging spirit. "I shouldn't like it," said the old

squire to himself as he lay quiet on his sofa. "I shouldn't like at all to be the humble guest of Augustus. Augustus would certainly say a nasty word or two."

The old man knew his younger son well, and he had known, too, the character of his elder son; but he had not calculated enough on the change which must have been made by such a revelation as he, his father, had made to him. Mountjoy had felt that all the world was against him, and that, as best he might, he would make use of all the world,—excepting only his father, who of all the world was the falsest and the most cruel. As for his brother, he would bleed his brother to the very last drop without any compunction. Every bottle of champagne that came into the house was, to Mountjoy's thinking, his own, bought with his money, and therefore fit to be enjoyed by him. But as for his father;—he doubted whether he could remain with his father without flying at his throat.

The old man decidedly preferred his elder son of the two. He had found that Augustus could not bear success, and had first come to dislike him, and then to hate him. What had he not done for Augustus? And with what a return! No doubt Augustus had, till the spring of this present year, been kept in the background; but no injury had come to him from that. His father, of his own good will, with infinite labour and successful ingenuity, had struggled to put him back in the place which had been taken from him. Augustus might, not unnaturally, have expressed himself as angry. He had not done so, but had made himself persistently disagreeable, and had continued to show that he was waiting impatiently for his father's death. It had come to pass that at their last meeting he had hardly scrupled to

tell his father that the world would be no world for him till his father had left it. This was the reward which the old man received for having struggled to provide handsomely and luxuriously for his son! He still made his son a sufficient allowance befitting the heir of a man of large property; but he had resolved never to see him again. It was true that he almost hated him, and thoroughly despised him.

But since the departure and mysterious disappearance of his eldest son, his regard for the sinner had returned. He had become apparently a hopeless gambler. His debts had been paid and repaid. At last the squire had learned that Mountjoy owed so much on post-obits, that the further payment of them was an impossibility. There was no way of saving him. To save the property he must undo the doings of his early youth, and prove that the elder son was illegitimate. He had still kept the proofs, and he did it. To the great disgust of Mr. Grey, to the dismay of the creditors, to the incredulous wonder of Augustus, and almost to the annihilation of Mountjoy himself, he had done it. But there had been nothing in Mountjoy's conduct which had in truth wounded him. Mountjoy's vices had been dangerous, destructive, absurdly foolish, but not, to his father, a shame. He ridiculed gambling as a source of excitement. No man could win much without dishonest practices, and fraud at cards would certainly be detected. But he did not on that account hate cards. There was no reason why Mountjoy should not become to him as pleasant a companion as ever for the few days that might be left to him, if only he would come. But, when asked, he refused to come. When the squire received the letter above given, he was not in the least angry with his son, but simply determined, if possible, that he should be brought to Tretton. Mountjoy's debts would now be paid, and something, if possible, should be done for him. He was so angry with Augustus that he would, if possible, revoke his last decision,—but that, alas! would be impossible.

Sir William Brodrick had, when he last saw him, expressed some hope—not of his recovery, which was by all admitted to be impossible—but of his continuance in the land of the living for another three months, or perhaps six, as Sir William had finally suggested, opening out as he himself seemed to think indefinite hope. "The most wonderful constitution, Mr.

Scarborough, I ever saw in my life. I've never known a dog even so cut about, and yet bear it." Mr. Scarborough bowed and smiled, and accepted the compliment. He would have taken the hat off his head, had it been his practice to wear a hat in his sitting-room. Mr. Merton had gone farther. Of course he did not mean, he said, to set up his opinion against Sir William's, but if Mr. Scarborough would live strictly by rule, Mr. Merton did not see why either three months or six should be the end of it. Mr. Scarborough had replied that he could not undertake to live precisely by rule; and Mr. Merton had shaken his head. But from that time forth Mr. Scarborough did endeavour to obey the injunctions given to him. He had something worth doing in the six months now offered to him.

He had heard lately very much of the story of Harry Annesley, and had expressed great anger at the ill-usage to which that young man had been subjected. It had come to his ears that it was intended that Harry should lose the property he had expected, and that he had already lost his immediate income. This had come to him through Mr. Merton, between whom and Augustus Scarborough there was no close friendship. And the squire understood that Florence Mountjoy had been the cause of Harry's misfortune. He himself recognised it as a fact that his son Mountjoy was unfit to marry any young lady. Starvation would assuredly stare such young lady in the face. But not the less was he acerbated and disgusted at the idea that Augustus should endeavour to take the young lady to himself. "What!" he had exclaimed to Mr. Merton; "he wants both the property and the girl. There is nothing on earth that he does not want. The greater the impropriety in his craving, the stronger the craving." Then he picked up by degrees all the details of the midnight feud between Harry and Mountjoy, and set himself to work to undermine Augustus. But he had steadily carried out the plan for settling with the creditors; and, with the aid of Mr. Grey had, as he thought, already concluded that business. Conjunction with Augustus had been necessary; but that had been obtained.

It is not too much to say that, at the present moment of his life, the idea of doing some injury to Augustus was the one object which exercised Mr. Scarborough's mind. Since he had fallen into

business relations with his younger son, he had become convinced that a more detestable young man did not exist. The reader will perhaps agree with Mr. Scarborough, but it can hardly be hoped that he should entertain the opinion as strongly. Augustus was now the recognised eldest legitimate son of the squire; and as the property was entailed it must no doubt belong to him. But the squire was turning in his mind all means of depriving that condition as far as was possible of its glory. When he had first heard of the injury that had been done to Harry Annesley, he thought that he would leave to our hero all the furniture, all the gems, all the books, all the wine, all the cattle which were accumulated at Tretton. Augustus should have the bare acres, and still barer house, but nothing else. In thinking of this he had been actuated by a conviction that it would be useless for him to leave them to Mountjoy; would in fact be left to the creditors; and therefore Harry Annesley with his injuries had been felt to be a proper recipient, not of the squire's bounty, but of the results of his hatred for his son.

To run counter to the law! That had ever been the chief object of the squire's ambition. To arrange everything so that it should be seen that he had set all laws at defiance! That had been his great pride. He had done so notably, and with astonishing astuteness, in reference to his wife and two sons. But now there had come up a condition of things in which he could again show his cleverness. Augustus had been most anxious to get up all the post-obit bonds which the creditors held, feeling,—as his father well understood,—that he would thus prevent them from making any further enquiry when the squire should have died. Why should they stir in the matter by going to law when there would be nothing to be gained? Those bonds had now been redeemed, and were in the possession of Mr. Grey. They had been bought up nominally by himself, and must be given to him. Mr. Grey, at any rate, would have the proof that they had been satisfied. They could not be used again to gratify any spite that Augustus might entertain. The captain, therefore, could now enjoy any property which might be left to him. Of course, it would all go to the gaming-table. It might even yet be better to leave it to Harry Annesley. But blood was thicker

than water,—though it were but the blood of a bastard. He would do a good turn for Harry in another way. All the furniture, and all the gems, and all the money, should again be the future property of Mountjoy.

But in order that this might be effected before he died, he must not let the grass grow under his feet. He thought of the promised three months, with a possible extension to six, as suggested by Sir William. "Sir William says three months," he said to Mr. Merton, speaking in the easiest way of the possibility of his living.

"He said six."

"Ah;—that is if I do what I'm told. But I shall not exactly do that. Three or six would be all the same, only for a little bit of business I want to get through. Sir William's orders would include the abandonment of my business."

"The less done the better. Then I do not see why Sir William should limit you to six months."

"I think that three will nearly suffice."

"A man does not want to die, I suppose," said Merton.

"There are various ways of looking at that question," replied the squire. "Many men desire the prolongation of life as a lengthened period of enjoyment. There is, perhaps, something of that feeling with me; but when you see how far I am crippled and curtailed, how my enjoyments are confined to breathing the air, to eating and drinking, and to the occasional reading of a few pages, you must admit that there cannot be much of that. A conversation with you is the best of it. Some want to live for the sake of their wives and children. In the ordinary acceptance of the words, that is all over with me. Many desire to live because they fear to die. There is nothing of that in me, I can assure you. I am not afraid to meet my Creator. But there are those who wish for life that their purposes of love, or stronger purposes of hatred, may be accomplished. I am among the number. But, on that account, I only wish it till those purposes have been completed. I think I'll go to sleep for an hour; but there are a couple of letters I want you to write before post-time." Then Mr. Scarborough turned himself round, and thought of the letters he was to write. Mr. Merton went out, and as he wandered about the park in the dirt and slush of December, tried to make up his mind whether he

most admired his patron's philosophy or condemned his general lack of principle.

At the proper hour he appeared again, and found Mr. Scarborough quite alert. "I don't know whether I shall have the three months unless I behave better," he said. "I have been thinking about those letters, and very nearly made an attempt to write them. There are things about a son which a father doesn't wish to communicate to anyone." Merton only shook his head. "I'm not a bit afraid of you, nor do I care for your knowing what I have to say. But there are words which it would be difficult even to write, and almost impossible to dictate." But he did make the attempt, though he did not find himself able to say all that he had intended. The first letter was to the lawyer.

"MY DEAR MR. GREY,—You will be surprised at my writing to summon you once again to my bedside. I think there was some kind of a promise made that the request should not be repeated; but the circumstances are of such a nature, that I do not well know how to avoid it. However, if you refuse to come, I will give you my instructions. It is my purpose to make another will, and to leave everything that I am capable of leaving to my son Mountjoy. You are aware that he is now free from debt, and capable of enjoying any property that he may possess. As circumstances are at present he would on my death be absolutely penniless, and Heaven help the man who should find himself dependent on the mercy of Augustus Scarborough.

"What I possess would be the balance at the bank, the house in town, and everything contained in and about Tretton, as to which I should wish that the will should be very explicit in making it understood that every conceivable item of property is to belong to Mountjoy. I know the strength of an entail, and not for worlds would I venture to meddle with anything so holy." There came a grin of satisfaction over his face as he uttered these words, and his scribe was utterly unable to keep from laughing. "But as Augustus must have the acres, let him have them bare."

"Underscore that word, if you please;" and the word was underscored. "If I had time I would have every tree about the place cut down."

"I don't think you could under the entail," said Merton.

"I would use up every stick in building the farmers' barns and mending the farmers'

gates, and I would cover an acre just in front of the house with a huge conservatory. I respect the law, my boy, and they would find it difficult to prove that I had gone beyond it. But there is no time for that kind of finished revenge."

Then he went on with the letter. "You will understand what I mean. I wish to divide my property so that Mountjoy may have everything that is not strictly entailed. You will of course say that it will all go to the gambling-table. It may go to the devil so that Augustus does not have it. But it need not go to the gambling-table. If you would consent to come down to me once more we might possibly devise some scheme for saving it. But whether we can do so or not it is my request that my last will may be prepared in accordance with these instructions.—Very faithfully yours,
JOHN SCARBOROUGH."

"And now for the other," said Mr. Scarborough.

"Had you not better rest a bit?" asked Merton.

"No; this is a kind of work at which a man does not want to rest. He is carried on by his own solitudes and his own eagerness. This will be very short, and when it is done, then perhaps I may sleep."

The second letter was as follows:

"MY DEAR MOUNTJOY,—I think you are foolish in allowing yourself to be prevented from coming here by a sentiment. But in truth, independently of the pleasure I should derive from your company, I wish you to be here on a matter of business which is of some importance to yourself. I am about to make a new will, and although I am bound to pay every respect to the entail, and would not for worlds do anything in opposition to the law, still I may be enabled to do something for your benefit. Your brother has kindly interfered for the payment of your creditors, and as all the outstanding bonds have been redeemed, you would now, by his generosity, be enabled to enjoy any property which might be left to you. There are a few tables and chairs at my disposal, and a gem or two, and some odd volumes which perhaps you might like to possess. I have written to Mr. Grey on the subject, and I would wish you to see him. This you might do whether you come here or not. But I do not the less wish that you should come.—Your affectionate father,
"JOHN SCARBOROUGH."

"I think that the odd volumes will fetch him. He was always fond of literature."

"I suppose it means the entire library," replied Merton.

"And he likes tables and chairs. I think he will come and look after the tables and chairs."

"Why not beds and washhand-stands," said Mr. Merton.

"Well, yes; he may have the beds and washhand-stands. Mountjoy is not a fool, and will understand very well what I mean. I wonder whether I could scrape the paper off the drawing-room walls, and leave the scraps to his brother without interfering with the entail. But now I am tired and will rest."

But he did not even then go to rest, but lay still scheming, scheming, scheming about the property. There was now another letter to be written, for the writing of which he would not again summon Mr. Merton. He was half ashamed to do so, and at last sent for his sister. "Martha," said he, "I want you to write a letter for me."

"Mr. Merton has been writing letters for you all the morning."

"That's just the reason why you should write one now. I am still in some slight degree afraid of his authority, but I am not at all afraid of yours."

"You ought to be quiet, John; indeed you ought."

"And in order that I may be quiet, you must write this letter. It's nothing particular or I should not have asked you to do it. It's only an invitation."

"An invitation to ask somebody here?"

"Yes; to ask somebody to come here. I don't know whether he'll come."

"Do I know him?"

"I hope you may, if he comes. He's a very good-looking young man, if that is anything."

"Don't talk nonsense, John."

"But I believe he's engaged to another young lady, with whom I must beg you not to interfere. You remember Florence?"

"Florence Mountjoy? Of course I remember my own niece."

"The young man is engaged to her."

"She was intended for poor Mountjoy."

"Poor Mountjoy has put himself beyond all possibility of a wife."

"Poor Mountjoy!" and the soft-hearted aunt almost shed tears.

"But we haven't to do with Mountjoy

now. Sit down there and begin. 'Dear Mr. Annesley——'

"Oh! It's Mr. Annesley; is it?"

"Yes, it is. Mr. Annesley is the handsome young man. Have you any objection?"

"Only people do say——"

"What do they say?"

"Of course I don't know; only I have heard——"

"That he is a scoundrel?"

"Scoundrel is very strong," said the old lady, shocked.

"A villain, a liar, a thief, and all the rest of it. That's what you have heard. And I'll tell you who has been your informant. Either first or second-hand, it has come to you from Mr. Augustus Scarborough. Now we'll begin again. 'Dear Mr. Annesley——' The old lady paused a moment, and then, setting herself firmly to the task, commenced and finished her letter as follows:

"DEAR MR. ANNESLEY,—You spent a few days here on one occasion, and I want to renew the pleasure which your visit gave me. Will you extend your kindness so far as to come to Tretton for any time you may please to name beyond two or three days? I am sorry to say that your friend Augustus Scarborough cannot be here to meet you. My other son, Mountjoy, may be here. If you wish to escape him, I will endeavour so to fix the time when I shall have heard from you. But I think there need be no ill blood there. Neither of you did anything of which you are, probably, ashamed; though as an old man I am bound to express my disapproval."

"Surely he must be ashamed," said Miss Scarborough.

"Never you mind. Believe me, you know nothing about it." Then he went on with his letter. "But it is not merely for the pleasure of your society that I ask you. I have a word to say to you which may be important.—Yours faithfully,

"JOHN SCARBOROUGH."

UNIQUE POTTERY.

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA dreamt of his beautiful ware, and toiled at it, and brought it to perfection, at beautiful Florence. There was shapely architecture there, standing amongst shapely hills. This showed him majestic columns, chiselled exquisitely; façades, and friezes, and groined

roofs, and delicious traceries; gateways, and aisles, and choirs, and sanctuaries—alive with saints and nimbi, and sculptured piety, and glory. And Luca, an artisan-boy, Florentine in all things, had this Florentine inspiration enter into his soul, and the seal of it is stamped upon his work, for all the world. He had had gold and silver under his hand for his apprentice-art before—he discarded it. He had wrought next at marble—he impatiently pushed it away. Then, moulding the clay that alone could be swift enough in manipulation for his swift creativeness, he saw how, if he could but surface the clay with a glaze, the art that he could put into the clay would be kept in it for centuries; and he laboured, with trial upon trial, and with trial again, till the secret of the glaze was there, mastered, and he was enabled at last to produce the Madonnas, the Magi, the saints, and the Holy Children, the symbols and allegories, the fruit-trophies and foliage, which are known by his name, and that attest, and ever will attest, his Italian environment and occupation.

Next, Bernard Palissy felt the inspiration to take clay and to fashion it—the inspiration to glorify clay by making it enduring, and coloured, and lustrous, and gem-like, through encasing it in a glaze or an enamel—amongst the hedgerows and the cornfields, the melon-grounds and purple vineries, of the broad French level washed by the Lot and the Dordogne. Very poor, a villager, in the age of primitive tillage, untaught (save for what book-learning he could give to himself, and for what art-learning was furnished by his own fine soul), he worked at his poor glass-painting amongst rural lanes and ditches, amongst wayside scenery, amongst the faggots and the pot-herbs of a poor French peasantry. He lived on coarse fare, he wore a coarse dress. He had the flowers of the woods and the flowers of the fields for his pictures; he had the birds for his musicians; he had the smooth cool breadth of the rivers for his only mirrors (with glittering fish to pick at the calm face of them; with a drift of shells to line their beds, and get washed up, fine and shining, upon their shallow shores); he had the miry marsh grounds, and the springs, and the pools, to yield ferns, and mosses, and cress, and flickering insects, to teem with the adders and lizards, and newts and efts, that made the sedgy margins gleam with dusky colour, and glisten with bright

splashes as the small creatures dived away; and he, Palissy, living amidst this, and steeped in it, carried the rusticity of it, and the simplicity of it, into the art-ware he was conceiving. He was those sixteen years heroically toiling to get the results he was resolved to get; he was those sixteen years heroically failing, and heroically rising from the failure, and heroically failing again; but all his "*Pièces Rustiques*," all his "*Pièces de Parade*," his "*Figulines*," give testimony to his memory of his plain French peasant life as truthfully as he himself gave testimony to it, by his mouth, in the lectures on nature and science which he came finally to deliver, and which all cultivated France came in delight to hear.

Then, the Faïence D'Oiron, or the Faïence de Diane de Poitiers, or the Faïence Henri Deux (it has all three names; sponsorship even of it, in a reverent manner, not being altogether fast-found, and the Faïence Gouffier being possibly its most correct christening), speaks to the same point. The setting of it differs once more, and markedly; but in it, and through it, there is the same principle. Royal precincts, and royal bearing, were among the experiences of the keramist who gave it its chasteness and ivory-like style, its elegant forms, its delicate suggestion only of colour, its dainty arabesque. He is nameless (except for conjecture; "he" is even thought to be a misreading for a veritable Dame du Cour); he has no (quite undisputed) identification; but, having the knowledge of courtliness, and exclusiveness, and self-restraint—and being forced by art-instincts to let his art-instincts get expression—there, out upon his ware, came his courtliness, his exclusiveness, his self-restraint, obviously. Haughty and high-born as his art-work may almost be said to be, the very noblesse and proud sang-bleu of porcelain; pure as it is, and pale as it is, and courtly, and refined, and apart, the purity of this Henri Deux and its pallor kept it courtly and refined and apart, just as the keramist himself was courtly and refined and apart, and as his work will proclaim that he was, for ever.

Now, men of the higher educated classes in England, with the artist in them, have not been accustomed to put their art into potters' clay. The material has not occurred to anybody as being fitting material, or easy. Neither has it been taken up by the amateur. For clay could

not be purified and fashioned on a carpeted floor; clay could not be "thrown," and decorated, and glazed, and baked, surrounded by brilliant furniture, and to an accompaniment of dilettanti discourse as to cobalt and azure, as to amphoræ and flagons, to émail and manganese. It has needed actual handicraft, and the setting-up of many of the ugly appliances of "works." It demanded personal discomfort, and a rough dress. It demanded continued hours of attention to a furnace; it demanded that precise knowledge of the precise blending of felspar, and silica, and lime, and so on, for the crucial finish, that had, every grain of it, to be experimentalised upon by Della Robbia and Palissy, and that requires experiment (if any new combination be desired), and that meets with unexpected baffling, to this very day. Clay being too exacting, therefore; clay making too much havoc with energies and time; so it has been let alone.

Go down though to Clevedon, Somersetshire; find out The Firwood there, the home of Mr. Edmund Harry Elton, and you will find it like entering into a thoroughly new domain. Sea and beach, and opposite shore, valley, and belt after belt of hill, distinguish Clevedon. Associations are there too, literary, and sad, and beautiful, that are so well in every one's mind, that it is not requisite for them to be recalled either. It is enough to say the words Coleridge, Hallam, Tennyson, "The Brothers," and there it all is; with the memory to help it out, of the quaint old loveliness of the Elton birth-place, fair Clevedon Court, just lately, alas! the prey of cruel flames and red destruction. And at Firwood none of this is lost. The dark trees climb up the long slope upon which the house is built, with a break of red earth and reddish tree-heart, to be seen when there has been a wrench off of a branch, or a tear away of the rich soil at the fir's roots; there is a growth along the road, right up to the house-lawn, and hiding it, of laurustinus and rhododendron and fern and gorse, as thick as a bower, as full of colour, at blooming time, as a nose-gay; there are shrubberies, where the firs have been kept away, of hawthorns and aucubas and arbutus and barberries, forming a splendour of leaf and shadow as the different months come; yet amongst it all, where stone steps just lead off to the vegetables and savoury herbs of the kitchen-garden, there is a small rough

shed, covering the troughs wanted for the fining of potters' clay, there is the thin rise of smoke from the little chimney of a potter's fire, there is the solid brickwork, and there is the sunk feeding-place with its store of fuel, of a potter's kiln. Be taken through the glass-doors of the grape-houses, too, and though they stand where there might be a mass of fruit, back to the ridge above the slope of grass, on the low terrace where the sun comes glistening down, the vines have been cut away, the stages and the tables have been emptied, and their places are filled with all the paraphernalia wanted for the potter's art. Here are saucers full of clay, worked up and compounded into the finest sort, stained the finest colours for ornamentation. Some are faint greens for foliage, and burnt greens for stems; some are faint lilacs for anemones; some will bake into a full amber for sunflowers, into full reds of every depth for hollyhocks and tulips, for pyracanthus and poppies. Corn-flowers sometimes come into Mr. Elton's scheme of decoration for his ware, too; and nemo-phila, and larkspur, and forget-me-nots; so here are pale-blue clays and brighter blue clays, that he may have them ready. And here are dull drabs and browns and greys, if he is going to represent fish and insects and bulrushes; and pure whites and stained whites for water-lilies; and pinks and straws and rich russets, and deep ultramarines and purples for backgrounds, and fruits, and the hearts of flowers, or whatever may come into his mind. Samples of colours that have been successfully employed, or unsuccessfully employed (both results require a record!) are here also. They are on slabs nailed up against the grape-house walls, each tint a knifeful or a smear; and they are numbered, as a business-like entry in a book is correspondingly numbered, so that, this way, any desired excellence can at any time be repeated, and any proved error be shunned. Little holders are flat against the walls, besides, for narrow knives to be thrust in; and for spatulas, and bradawls, and crotchet-needles; for anything, ready at a juncture—of bone, or wood, or iron, that is slim-edged and pointed, and will serve its turn, as its turn comes, to shape a petal or channel a stalk, to prick-up stamen or the antennæ of a butterfly, to indent those radii under a vase-lip and along the margin of it, which are so dear to Mr. Elton, and so certain to get able marking from him, before he can think a "piece"

finished, and can lay it contentedly out of his fine artist-hand.

Clays, in big bulk, and in all manner of stages, are lying about, of course. Here in this rough shed that does not keep out all of the sky, and that gives a clear view up of the slim firs, and a clear view down of the sunny and tufted valley—here, with marjoram and mint and cabbage up to the very edge of it, is a heap of the clay, dull and damp and weighty, just as it has been wheeled in from anywhere upon the country-side—here, in this trough of boiling water, as closely in the midst of pea-rows and celery-trenches as if it had been a hothouse-stove, is as much as a couple of hodsful (about) of clay, refining and refining, and that must be kept refining till all of its coarseness and grit has been scummed away, and it is as smooth and as pure for working as lard or Devonshire cream. Here, in what it is plain to see has been a kitchen, but that is now veritably "the potter's house," holding "the potter's wheel," are loaves, they may be called, of clay, which the trough has purified, which have been passed as fit, and which are lying now upon the boards, upon the shelves, upon the table, ready to be "thrown." The "throwing," moreover, the actual process of it, can be seen, since there has been a wish that it should be seen. For, though Mr. Elton has received his guests as a host would, passing from drawing-room to hall, with comments as to what his ware rose from, and what his ware may grow to be, with comments drawn from portrait and group and statuette, on clay-art and metal-art, and form and colour, in illustration; and though he has led down into this "house" here, by stand and recess, where rod and gun, and trophies of skin and antler, give casual indication of outdoor leisure-life, as these indicate outdoor leisure-life in any country-house elsewhere, yet he is stripping himself of the velvet coat and great enwrapping apron in which he has shown kiln and drying-arch, light ornamenting house, and open shed, and he is rapidly putting on a knitted jacket that shall give every muscle fair play, surmounting it by a coarser apron that will stand rough splash and spot and smear. Further, he is rapidly turning up his wrist-bands, a potter veritably; and in a moment will be at work.

"It is an art that is not the cleanest," he explains, drawing up the front of his apron that he may get astride his stool. "The clay is wet, to begin with,

and it has to be kept wet to a small degree as I go along. So neighbours too near will not care for the neighbourhood when the wheel begins to turn. And I can't take care, unfortunately. It's not to be done."

Any care required was to rest with the visitors themselves. But visitors quickly found "the thrower's" part of pottery so interesting, that the inclination was to get as near as might be, with philosophic indifference to clay-splash, should any clay-splash come. For when the small lump of earth (call it a big unbaked bun) was put upon the board and by the action of the pedals the detached middle of the board began to spin, whirling and whirling easily, and whirling smoothly, the clay rose, kept hollow by the mere presence of the hand, and the clay rose still, higher and higher, growing from a saucer to a cup, from a cup to a basin, from a basin to a recognisable vase; and the art was so charming, it was charming enough to have borne looking at for an hour. And yet, it is droll, the art was so simple it brought out openly an amused thought.

"The mid-county fashion of raising a pork-pie!"

"Yes," the idea was met with—"yes; for, take pottery at its best, or take pottery"—there were pauses, Mr. Elton's attention being wanted to the spin and the whirl, to be sure that it was kept even—"take pottery at its worst, and it is but the superior mud-pies that boys delight in."

Yes, again, truly. The germ—to attempt at being scientific—of "potter's vessels" may be discoverable in a mud pie, the germ of an ancient British crock,* incised roughly, but expressively, on bulge and lip, the germ equally of Keats's Grecian Urn.

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens, overwrought
With forest branches and the trodden weed!

But germs are generations away from the perfect mechanism of the art now being exemplified, and this mechanism should be watched. Mr. Elton desires, let us suppose, to narrow the growing vase at a certain height up, giving it a neck. He does it by a deft squeeze outside, lasting several whirls. Mr. Elton desires to open the vase above the narrowing, for a graceful head; he does it by a deft movement, in,

* "Crochan" is still the Welsh for a pot; with "crochenydd," the potter; and "crochenyddiaeth," pottery.

of enough of the hand, for a few whirls again. He desires to give this head-edge variety, not leaving it solidly round, without incident or character; it is done by a thumb-press here, a thumb-press there, marks of individuality that can never (after baking) be marked away. He desires to shape out the vase's base, with a thin line round it just deep enough to show the score; it is done with one of the tools reached from the side wall, its point held closely, as the whirlings go. And so, when the clay is seen to have been whirled too dry, and it wants damping, a wet sponge is held over it till enough water has been squeezed from it, and been allowed to fall; and so, when, after the vase has had all the shaping it is designed to have, it is certain that over-much of water has been left inside, a second sponge, dry, is ready on a stick, to be dipped in, and drawn round, and then squeezed and dipped in again, till all moisture not wanted has been removed.

"And if the clay is 'marred in the hand of the potter!'"

"The marring finishes it," Mr. Elton answers. "It is worth no more than mere clay again; the throwing wasted. But," he explains, "it is not at throwing that there is much failure; for beyond that it is necessary to feel that the clay is not getting thrown too thin (feeling this whilst the throwing is going on, of course, and before the neck is narrowed), in which case the next whirl might bring a hole, there is little chance of anything going wrong. The failure, the disappointment, the suspense, the defeat, are farther on. All that comes in the kiln."

There was the point, the inner core. Down here in English Clevedon it is the same as it was found to be by Della Robbia at Florence, by Palissy in Perigord, by the loyal châtelain and châtelaine of Château D'Oiron, amidst their signorial ceremonies and refinement, in the reign of Henri Deux. It is on that beautiful process of enamelling that all triumphs or overthrows are centred; it is when there is the facing of that beautiful process of enamelling, that there rush in such hopeless uncertainties and inexplicabilities.

"And with me," said Mr. Elton, in illustration of this, "and it is here where it is so curious, for the first six months I never had a failure. It was all a delicious success. Then for the next six months, although I proceeded in just the same way,

although I took just the same materials, just the same quantities, just the same care, I never had a single piece right. Every kilnful was spoiled. Utterly. And I could find no remedy; for I could find no cause."

Precisely. As in the South and the East, getting dusky richness of tint, getting oriental iris-effect of metal-like emblazonry, as in less costly fictile productions, belonging nearer to home and nearer to to-day, so the indefatigable artist, here, could be sure of his "throwing;" could be sure of his drying (a manual part, in which he avails himself of a man and a boy, his sole "hands"); could be sure even of his colouring—though there is much of a certain kind of experiment over this; colours being nearly colourless before baking (the time, of course, when they are applied), yet colours having to be calculated for in their baked intensity, and being, after all, liable to be drawn from the kiln several shades or degrees different to expectation. So, too, could the artist here (barring the surprise of this possible variation of depth and tone of colour) be quite sure of the arrangement of his bold and effective ornamentation. Supposing he had chosen to represent on a bowl, in his original manner, king-cups, marguerites, fish, ivy—supposing he had chosen to form a scarlet lady-bird, letting it settle on a cream anemone, to form a caterpillar, shown just looping up its back to crawl up a dog-rose stem, he could go on to the representation, and on to the forming, being certain that, whether satisfying his art-sense in the result or not, they would both be there.* Had, also, he been impressed, somewhere, with the massing of, say, a pinkish hollyhock, he could try for the same effect on the vase he would next be working on; just as he has tried for the effect on the jardinière fixed on this revolving pedestal here, scarcely yet out of hand. Had he been impressed somewhere else with the fine grouping of other flowers—yellow jasmine, apple-blossoms; or with fruit—the apples, whole—or medlars, nectarines, plums; he could embody his impressions in the decoration of whatever vase, or tazza, or compotier, or sçeau, was ready for him, and he could divest himself of all but the true artist's doubt and diffidence as to what would be the end. But, when the

* By permission, specimens of this ware may still be seen at the Art Furnishers' Alliance, Bond Street, No. 157.

next step was the putting of all this amassment of beautiful form, and decoration, and colour, into the kiln, was the filling of that small brick cupboard, as it may be called, with all this heaping of pale-grey, and pale-pink, and pale-green vessels (to give them a generic term), when the next step was the laying these in, lip to base, or base to lip, or ornamented front to plainer reverse, or mouth down, or mouth up, any way, so that their pale hues might but, by the heat, be translated into those ruddy and radiant violets, and mazarines, and rubies, that should make each piece superb; then Mr. Elton, like all others, had to submit to conditions that were often cruel, and over which he had no control. The sealing up of the kiln's door follows. It is done by absolute layers of brick and spread of mortar, by layers of brick and spread of mortar again, leaving only a small aperture practicable, through which from time to time to pick out the "triers" for proof; sealed up with even this aperture so managed that, between whiles, it has no cranny by which a breath of air could take itself in; then there comes the stop, the barrier, the block, that stands before every karamist, at Clevedon or elsewhere, and the rest is—almost chance.

"We may be as many as twelve hours getting the heat up," Mr. Elton says. "We may be till morning over this very batch. I have myself been here a whole night through, never daring to leave, but till the triers "run," as we call it, it is absurd to think of hurry. We must let it take its own time and its own way."

"And the triers? Which is a trier?"

This. This little screw-nut, apparently; this little inch-wide, half-inch high, thick, white, halfpenny, say, with a hole in it, by which it can be hooked hold of, and hooked out, when inspection is required. If the enamel on this has run, shows proper glaze and amalgamation, all is well; if not, there must be greater heat raised, and, in time, a trier withdrawn again. And, long as it takes to heat a kiln, it takes longer to cool it—the last requirement before opening and examination. This one, with all that pinkish, bluish, greenish hoard, as it lies heaped, of flower, and leaf, and stalk, and tendril, will take as much as two days. It will be two days of sharp suspense. In it, the gun and the rod, that have never had much attraction, and the saddle and the oar, are not likely to become so much more attrac-

tive that they will lead Mr. Elton very far away, though there are coverts and shallows close about, and stretches of open country, and miles of sailable sea, that would invite eloquently, if invitation could be allowed to come. For Mr. Elton is an artist, putting all of his heart into his art, which makes it that he will be unable to be quite at ease till the fate of his batch is known. And it is precisely because a man who could get up day after day to ride, and fish, and shoot if he liked, who could pass his hours in the library or in public work, has resolved to devote his best years to unique pottery, that The Firwood at Clevedon has been mounted to, and the pottery has been seen. Because what there is about here of nature, of association, of historic interest, will get into the pottery, it is certain. Because, what there is in the artist of culture, and taste, and energy, and breeding, will get into the pottery, it is certain, also. And, undreamt of as this fact may be by the artist himself, now, in the youth of his art and his application to it, there will be a result from it that cannot at present be calculated, and, hat will make its mark. It is inevitable. Art's own laws entail it.

BY THE REEDS OF THE RIVER.

A STORY.

"MIDAS has ass's ears."

The reeds by the river took up the whisper, and as the sweet summer wind passed over them their low mocking voices repeated it until the words became a soft *Æolian* chorus. And the girl who had spoken them in her bitter impatience felt ashamed herself of their cruelty, while the tall ox-eyed daisies, waving to and fro in the brown scented grasses, shook their graceful heads reproachfully.

"But he has a king's heart. Sorrow has made you unjust, oh maiden," they murmured, bending as the wing of a passing zephyr fanned them till they touched the brown head of the girl lying back among the tall grass.

She made a restless movement, and then sitting up pushed the hair off her forehead.

"What is the use of your talking," she said impatiently, as if she understood the flowers' language. "I don't love him as I ought to! And they say he has been so good to me, and he is rich, and that I ought to be glad that he cares for me. But what is all his gold to me?"

The daisies sighed pityingly. They knew what the poor king's sorrow would be, for had they not often seen him down here by the river with this girl and learnt what his love was for her?

Then a lark soared high up into the heavens with a burst of such joyous melody that the daisies and grasses forgot mortal sorrows and woes in the delight of its song, and as it died away in the far distance, they took up their own sweet murmur of praise and thankfulness which ran through the land as it lay bathed in the golden sunshine, while the mortal resting down among their scented depths turned with a little passionate gesture, and hid her face downwards on the breast of warm mother earth.

"I am so miserable! Is there no one to help me?"

But there was no reply, for Pan was dead, and with him had vanished all the other voices which had answered the cries of mortals like herself in the days when the earth was young, so after a while she sat up again, and, turning her face to the river, which ran along the valley beneath her, she remained silent, her hands loosely clasped before her, her head a little bent, listening to the sound of the water as it rushed between its narrow banks, and finally fell over in a miniature cataract some yards farther down.

"What are you listening for, Miss Roscoe?"

A sudden thrill ran through the girl's frame, while her face flushed crimson at the unexpected greeting.

A man had come up softly behind her through the long grass, and had been watching her.

"I was listening for the great god Pan," she said gravely, springing to her feet, and pushing back with a little confusion the soft hair that the summer wind had sighed out of its place.

"Pan is dead," he answered, with a smile as grave as her own, as he sank into the grass at her feet. "He died down by the river long ago, and——"

"Don't you think it is a pity?" asked the girl, still in the same odd serious tone, as she sat down too, but not in her old place; she had moved farther off. "Surely those old days were best, when we had only to wander through the woods, and ask our questions and speak our doubts, and every tree had a voice, and every stream a naiad who would come at your call. Now there seems a silence over all the land, and——"

"Pan is dead," said the young man, turning away suddenly from the curious looks, pleading, reproachful, sorrowful, all in one, of those violet-blue eyes, "and there is no answer to our questions, and we have to flounder out of our difficulties as best we can. It is the result of living in a civilised age, Miss Roscoe. Art has taken the place of Nature, and Midas is worth more than Apollo."

There was just a ring of bitterness in the last words, but he was looking down into the river as it flashed and sparkled before them in sudden glimpses between the alders on its banks, and he did not see the paling of the girl's face, nor the eager parting of her lips, as if she would deny his cynical assertion.

Midas worth more than Apollo! A vision of another man, who seemed to have had the gift of Midas himself—for everything he had undertaken had turned into gold—rose up by the side of the one before her.

With a little shiver, the girl turned her eyes away. Then she rose to her feet. The rustle of the grass roused her companion, and he looked up at her as she stood among the grasses and daisies, bathed in the sunlight that fell around.

Her hat and her gloves lay at her feet, and as her companion looked at the slight graceful figure, dressed in a simple white garment that left bare her round throat and white arms, a sudden fancy seized him.

She might have been the nymph Echo herself, waiting for the words of Pan.

The dreamy summer air, the low murmur of the river below, the hush of Nature's grand mystery, into which mortal eyes can never see quite clearly, added reality to the thought, and a mad longing seized him that he and she could close their eyes, and wake together in an age that had vanished so completely into the past that the men of to-day could only see in it all a beautiful myth—an age when mortals loved and wooed as they would, and gods and goddesses helped them in their despair, and stood between them and an adverse fate—an age when there were no long columns of £ s. d. to be added up before Love could claim his own.

Then his fancy received a sudden check and ended in bitterness as all his fancies of Madge Roscoe did. A flush of shame dyed his sunburnt cheek.

How could he be so base, so ungrateful as to covet this one blessing which the man

who had brought him up as his own son craved for himself?

He who owed his guardian, George Capel, everything, to try and come now between him and his affianced wife!

When his guardian had written out to him last year and told him of his intended marriage, Douglas Murray's only fear had been that the wife he had chosen would, in her youth and inexperience, scarcely appreciate the goodness and tenderness of George Capel. There was always the risk of his being married for his money alone, and Douglas Murray had been guilty now and then of doubts as to Miss Roscoe's motives. Still, if the marriage made George Capel happy! He had come home himself on a year's leave, and had been staying with his guardian until the wedding, which at Miss Roscoe's request had been delayed a few months.

Before the delay was over, Douglas Murray had repented that year's leave as one of the greatest mistakes in his life.

Every hard thought, every doubt he had had of Madge Roscoe, had been punished a hundredfold in the bitterness and pain of a love that had come upon him unawares—a great despairing love for the girl who made the very sunshine of his guardian's life, the girl who in another week would be that man's wife.

He had fought hard enough against his love. He had gone away and made long absences, when things at last seemed to be going too hard for him, but he only came back to fall at the first sound of her voice, the first touch of her hand, more deeply than before into this sea of a passion that was treachery, of a love that was base ingratitude.

He had resisted till now—till now.

A faint breeze passed over the field and stirred the white draperies of her dress and lifted the soft brown curls from her forehead, just as some laughing zephyr might have played with the robe and hair of Echo herself, as she stood waiting for her lover's voice.

A sudden mad impulse seized the young officer to fling himself at her feet and hold her there as she waited, never to let her go again in answer to the call that must come so soon now.

Ah, what was he thinking of?

Who was he that he should try to prevent her following, when he who was to be her husband should call her? He raised his hat from his head for a moment, and let the cool air fan his forehead, on which

the sharp struggle he had just gone through had brought great drops of moisture. Then he sprang to his feet.

She did not seem to notice that he had risen, but was standing still in the same curious listening attitude, or at least so it struck Douglas Murray.

"Have you found out what Pan is saying?" he asked with a smile, though his face was still pale.

"Yes. Why did you speak!" she exclaimed with a kind of passionate impatience. "His voice came up to me like a sigh from the river, and he told me that his pipes do not sing of love at all. They are only the echo of all the discord there is in the world, of the cross-purposes, and disappointments, and mistakes." Then she laughed slightly, but the sound was not like her usual merry voice. "Pan does not often speak now, and you should not have interrupted him. Now he will never say anything more, and I shall be sorry to the end of my days for the remembrance of his speech, when, perhaps, if I had only waited a little longer, he might have told me something better."

A sudden dread had come into Douglas Murray's face as she spoke, and as she finished he drew a quick breath.

"What do you mean, Miss Roscoe?" he asked, his voice grown suddenly harsh. "Pan does not say those things to you. You who have all that a woman's heart desires most, a good man's love—a life of happiness and ease, riches——"

"Riches!" Then Madge Roscoe turned swiftly upon him. "What right have you to think that women set such store upon wealth? Have you found them so hard and so mercenary, so——?"

"So hard and so mercenary," he echoed slowly, apparently not perceiving the sudden catch in her voice which prevented her continuing. "I don't know. I don't know if women prefer riches to love, but even if they did, if I were free to speak to the woman I loved, I should do it, though I had not wealth to give her. But at least she should know; and if she preferred one man's purse to another's heart, well, she would have had her choice."

He scarcely knew himself how bitterly he was speaking. He had never, since he had known her, accused her in his own mind of mercenary motives in giving her youth and beauty in exchange for the wealth and the position of the older man. He knew that she had received manifold kindnesses from George Capel, just as he,

Douglas Murray, had done himself; and knowing the goodness and tenderness of his guardian, he had begun to see no strangeness in his winning a young girl's love. But now the bitterness of his own disappointed love made him feel harsh and unjust. Even if he had been free to speak, was it likely that a girl, penniless and homeless but for his guardian's kindness, having the choice, would have taken him, little better off than herself?

"And so you think that I am mercenary, Mr. Murray," she said, speaking very quietly, though the crimson in her face deepened, and there was a curious brightness in her eyes as she looked steadily at him. "You have often told me of what you owe your guardian, and of the impossibility of ever paying your debt. Do you think that I never feel the same desire of gratitude—that I do not feel that even the giving up of my whole life is little to yield in return? Do you know that he found me, a child of six years, by the side of my dead parents, without a single friend in the world to come between me and starvation, and that from that day till now he has given me everything, until the debt had grown so large that I despaired of ever paying it till he showed me the way last year."

"Did my words mean as much as that, that you should reproach me in this fashion, Miss Roscoe? What a brute you must think me! Yet it was your words only that made me speak. They sounded too sorrowful for a happy girl's lips. They would have been more appropriate from me," he added with a laugh he tried to make light.

"Why from you?" she asked quickly.

"Why from me? Ah, that is a question I may not answer," he said, looking away from her again.

"Why not?" she asked again, her voice growing cold and hard. "Is it too difficult?"

Without a word he turned and looked at her.

It seemed as if in that moment all the light and the brightness, the hope and the passion of feeling that live in the heart of men and women when they are still young, had been crushed back out of their whole lives as they looked into each other's eyes. For one second they might have been frozen into stone; hers hard, pitiless, almost mocking; his set, stern, rigid, with the terrible struggle against the flood that was sweeping over him. For one second he held his own, then something seemed to snap

within him. Was it his heart's life, or the golden thread of honour that bound everything together that makes life worth living? What was life without love? The hot blood swept over his white face, melting its frozen stillness, and kindling into life all the passionate love of his heart, the stern resistance of before making self-control all the harder now.

But, before he could speak, before he could take one step nearer, a low cry broke from Madge.

"No, don't answer it!" she exclaimed. "I know what you would say; I know what the answer is. I was mad! Can you ever forgive me?"

She had shrunk away from him, and was holding out her hands with a passionate entreaty as if to ward off a stroke before which her strength would fail.

All the hardness had gone out of her face, and as he still came a step nearer, she looked up into his, her eyes dull with a mist of tears, her lips trembling and pitiful, her whole face filled with a great dread and—something else!

"Forgive me! Do not be too hard upon me!" her sweet voice broke into a sob—"if you understand."

He understood only too well. A great light sprang into his eyes, and with one quick step he was at her side; so close that she might almost have heard his heart throbbing with his delight at the joy that had come into his life.

"Mr. Murray—Douglas! I was mad, wicked, but for the love he loves me with, and for all that I owe him, do not make me too ashamed. Douglas, don't speak; don't tell me that. Be merciful to me!"

The tears that had gathered in her eyes rained down her cheeks, and as he still did not answer, she drew farther away from him.

"It is no use now, I could not be unfaithful to him. I have promised!"

For one moment, as he stood there looking at her, there rose before the young man the vision of what his coming life might be with this girl by his side, loving him as he loved her, and, in dark contrast, the shadow, the blackness and desolation that would fall over all if he should let her go.

If he pleaded, as he felt he could plead, he might succeed in making her see that the marriage upon which she was entering was a sin, not a righteous act. Better that the other should have the cup of the blessing he craved so dearly dashed from

his lips now, than that he should find out one day, when too late, that he was an unloved husband.

At another time Douglas Murray would have decided easily enough. But now, with the blindness of his own love upon him, accusing him of ingratitude and treachery, he could not see clearly. He knew now that he had only resisted his love when it had been too late, and that at the first knowing Madge to be the very light of George Capel's life, he had yet allowed himself, with the sense of his own danger full upon him, to be perpetually in her society.

How faithful George Capel had been to them, in his thousand kindnesses that nothing could repay, in his marvellous tendernesses, in his perfect trust in their truth and honour! Yet their hands were to strike the hardest blow that he would ever meet in life's battle. In Douglas Murray's pain and perplexity, he could not see the fine line marking off grand self-renunciation from needless self-sacrifice, but, at least, he would not deal a blow from which all his sense of honour and chivalry, of gratitude and affection, revolted.

He went to her side again, but only to take her hands in his and bend down to kiss them.

"Child, child! I cannot tell what is best to do, only——" Then he broke off with impatient bitterness. "Why should this sorrow have come into our life? It was hard for me before, but then I did not know that I had won your love; now——"

"Hush! You will be brave, and so soon learn to bear it," she said, trying to smile. "It is very foolish of us, but I don't think it was wicked, because we could not help it. Now, when it is wrong, we give it up."

"Is it wrong, do you think, Madge? Is not it wrong rather to give your life when you cannot give your love?" he began again, as a sudden thought of all that he was losing vanquished for a moment his efforts to be true to his friend.

She shivered, and drew further away from him.

"He told me, only yesterday, that without me his whole life would become desolate. That he loved me with a love that made all other things worthless beside it; that the day he had first seen me, I had taken a place in his heart from which nothing could displace me; that I alone could make his life perfectly content and happy. Yet even with all this, he told me, too, to think of my own happiness

first, and that even then it was not too late to draw back. Think! I, who owed him everything! Then I gave him my solemn promise that I would never give him cause for pain, nor fail him in the smallest demand. Could I do so now?"

But the young man was not quite strong yet.

"It is your love he wants, not the sacrifice of yourself," he exclaimed with one last effort to set things straight, though the very hopelessness of it half sickened him with its despair.

"He will never know. Besides, I do love him, as any woman must love and honour a friend who has been what he has to me—even though it is not as—— Douglas, don't make me say any more. Some day it will not be so hard for you—you will forget."

"Don't, darling! I shall never love any woman as I love you."

He was holding her hands in his, but her eyes were blinded with tears; she could not even try to smile again. She could only guess, not see, the pain and the great longing of his face.

But he did not say any more.

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Madge, my darling!" Then he bent and left a kiss on her mouth.

The next moment he was gone, across the field with its wealth of waving grasses, and scarlet and white flowers; but it was not the golden sunshine alone that dazzled his eyes and made it difficult to see his way clearly, and it was, perhaps, as well for his reputation of stoicism and sturdy endurance, that the young officer had the place to himself, and that there was no one to wonder at the sudden mist that dimmed his eyes as he turned away from his love by the reeds of the river.

Madge did not look after him. She stood for a few minutes just where he had left her, her eyes looking straight across the river, which flashed and sparkled in the sunshine, and seemed to mock her with the voices of its merry waters.

Then, with a passionate cry of pain, she flung herself down on the ground and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Is she right?" asked the ox-eyed daisies wonderingly, their faces drooping full of pity towards her.

"How can we tell?" exclaimed the grasses quickly, impatiently shaking their brown heads. "Mortals have to decide for themselves, and—love is not everything!"

But the reeds laughed and whispered softly to themselves, down by the banks of the river :

"Midas was not so very foolish after all. He was only a mortal, and it was little wonder he was bewildered. Things are ordered so strangely sometimes in that other world that is beyond the fields and the forests and the rivers. And it is not always easy to see the difference between Apollo's music and Pan's pipes, which sing so sweetly of earth's loves and happiness. Some day——" But the wind caught up the whisper and carried it away, and the daisies and the grasses who were listening were obliged only to guess at what the end of that parting by the reeds of the river might be.

REMARKABLE COMETS.

THE earliest observers of comets were either among the Chinese or the Chaldeans, and the latter people arrived, as we shall see hereafter, at a fairly correct idea of the cause of their advent. Among the most ancient nations, especially the Greeks and Romans, comets were regarded as not only precursors of evil but frequently also of good fortune. Thus in the year 344 B.C. the appearance of a great comet was thought to be a token of the success of Timoleon's expedition to Sicily. Again, in the year 134 or 135 B.C., the birth of the great Mithridates was signalled by two remarkable comets whose brightness, we are told, eclipsed that of the noon-day sun, and which occupied a quarter of the heavens. It may be as well here to state that the accounts of the comets of these remote ages are evidently highly coloured by the imagination or superstition of the writers, and cannot be depended on for anything like scientific accuracy. The accession of Mithridates in the year 118 B.C. to the throne of Pontus was likewise marked by a celestial visitant of the same nature.

A comet which shone in the year 86 B.C. was thought by Pliny to have been the forerunner of the civil commotions during the consulship of Octavius, and another which appeared in 43 B.C. was believed to be the soul of Julius Cæsar transported to the heavens.

Later on, a number of comets, during the reign of Nero, were seized on by that emperor as pretexts for all kinds of persecution. Tacitus, referring to one of these, remarks that it was "a kind of presage

which Nero always expiated with noble blood."

Josephus relates that in 69 A.D., among the terrible omens which foretold the doom of Jerusalem, was a comet with a tail in the shape of a sword, which hung for a year over the city.

Comets were very frequently regarded in past times as the presages of the death of some illustrious personage, and since the prediction was considered as verified if that person died within two or three years after, it is hardly wonderful that it is recorded in a large number of cases that the warning was fulfilled. But there is good reason to suspect that some of the comets which are said to have ushered in remarkable events, were inventions of the credulous or superstitious chronicler, and that many others appeared not before, but after the occurrences they were said to predict. This is proved to have been the case with the comet which was thought to have caused the abdication of Charles the Fifth.

Comets are said to have foretold the death of the Emperors Vespasian, Constantine the Great, and Valentinian, of Attila the Hun, Mahomet, Louis the Second, Richard Cœur de Lion, Philip of Spain, Francis the Second, and many other potentates, too many to mention.

The historian Sozomenes describes a terrible comet which hung over Constantinople in the year 400, and was believed to be the cause of the pestilence that devastated the city.

During the Middle Ages comets were almost universally considered as foretelling calamities. We read less of them as presaging an auspicious reign or honouring the birth of a great hero, than as the precursors of plague, famine, or war.

In the year 1000, it was popularly believed that the world was coming to an end, and it may be easily imagined that men's minds were in a state to exaggerate the importance of any phenomena in the heavens. A comet which was visible in that year for nine days was described as being shaped like a dragon, and as having many impossible accompaniments.

Shortly before William the Conqueror crossed to Britain, a comet with three tails made its appearance, which was said by his courtiers to prove the divine right of the invader to the throne. "Nova stella, novus rex," was the popular saying. In an ancient Norman Chronicle we read: "How a star with three long tails appeared in the

sky; how the learned declared that stars only appeared when a kingdom wanted a king; and how the said star was called a comette."

This comet has been proved to be identical with that afterwards discovered by Halley, and had already appeared several times, in the years 684 A.D., 12 B.C., and possibly 135 B.C., in which case it was the same as that which announced the birth of Mithridates.

One of its most notable reappearances was during the year 1456, while the Turks were besieging Belgrade. Both armies were thrown into consternation by the sight, and the Pope Calixtus the Third, by no means superior to the general panic, anathematised the unwelcome visitor, and, by way of precaution, ordered the church bells to be rung daily at noon; at the same time instituting a new prayer, the *Angelus de Midi*, which still continues in use in Roman Catholic churches. Encouraged by these measures, and reinforced by forty thousand men whom the Franciscans brought to his aid, Hunniades, the papal general, engaged in a great battle with the Turks, and compelled them to raise the siege.

Previous to the time of Newton the appearances and movements of comets were a great puzzle to philosophers, and many were their speculations as to their nature.

The Chaldeans had by no means a totally false notion of the causes of their appearance and disappearance, attributing them to the fact that they revolve in orbits far above the moon, so as to be only visible to us during a small portion of their revolution. They were also right in believing them to be of a nature allied to the planets rather than mere atmospheric phenomena. This view was adopted by the astronomer Apollonius of Myndus, who, as Seneca relates, received his ideas from the Chaldeans. It was also held by Diogenes the Ionic philosopher, Hippocrates of Chios, and several of the Pythagorean school. Seneca seems to have had the same opinion.

Democritus, Zeno, and other philosophers held comets to be clusters of planets, while others looked upon them as mere optical illusions having no real existence. Aristotle, on the other hand, declared that they were mere exhalations rising from the earth, and that these on reaching the upper stratum of the atmosphere, which from its contiguity to the region of fire he conceived to be of a high temperature, caught fire, and were visible during the process of combustion, vanishing when the supply of

combustible matter failed. According to this view a comet when it disappeared was annihilated for ever. This theory was generally held throughout the Middle Ages. It was finally upset by Tycho Brahe, whose observations on the comet of 1577 left no room for doubt that these bodies are extraneous to the atmosphere.

Still, astronomers were unable to explain the movements of comets satisfactorily. Some, as Galileo and Kepler, supposed them to move in straight lines, while Cassini reverted to the old idea of circular orbits. When, however, Newton found that under the influence of the law of universal gravitation bodies might revolve in paths whose form was that of an ellipse, parabola, or hyperbola, he at once foresaw the possibility of accounting for the movements of comets by the same laws which regulate those of the planets. A brilliant comet which was visible from November 3rd, 1679, to March 9th, 1680, afforded him an opportunity of putting this theory to a practical test. The result was that after a series of observations he demonstrated that the path of the comet was a parabola, or an extremely elongated ellipse, which was confirmed by the investigations of the great astronomer Halley.

This body would therefore always be of interest to astronomers, as being the first whose orbit was determined on scientific principles. It was, however, remarkable in many ways. Its path was nearly perpendicular to the plane of the ecliptic, and there was a popular belief that it would come into collision with the earth—a notion which has often prevailed with regard to other comets. There seemed indeed, at one time, good grounds for belief that it would actually fall into the sun, which it approached nearer than any other known comet, with the exception of the one lately visible, being distant only one hundred and forty-seven thousand miles from its surface during its perihelion passage. The temperature of the comet at this point was calculated by Newton to be two thousand times that of red-hot iron. Whiston erroneously fixed the period of the comet of 1680 as only five hundred and seventy-five years, and thus made the date of one of its former appearances fall on the year of the Noachian Deluge, which catastrophe he assigned to its agency. The true period, as obtained by Encke, is about eight thousand eight hundred years.

Two years later appeared the comet always associated with the name of its

discoverer, Halley. This great astronomer determined its path to be an ellipse, and its period comparatively short—only about seventy-five years. He also succeeded in tracing back its former appearances to before the Christian era, and demonstrated its identity with several well-known comets, as we have noted above. Accordingly he predicted its return about the year 1758. Halley died before this year, but Clairaut undertook the laborious task of calculating more exactly the period of the comet's reappearance, taking into account the perturbations caused by the proximity to its path of Jupiter and Saturn. The result was that the actual return of Halley's comet differed only by thirty-two days from that calculated by Clairaut. Thus at once Newton's theory and Halley's prediction were triumphantly verified.

This comet reappeared in the year 1835, and may be expected to be again visible in 1910.

Another remarkable comet of short period is that which bears the name of Encke, the computer of its orbit. Discovered in 1818 by Pons, it was soon identified, by the similarity of its elements, with a comet observed in 1805. Its period was calculated to be only about three years and a third. Since then it has reappeared many times, and the curious fact was soon observed that its period of revolution was constantly diminishing, or in other words, that "its orbit was gradually becoming smaller," so that, should this diminution continue, it will finally be absorbed in the central luminary. This interesting observation has given rise to much speculation, and various causes have been assigned, among others the existence in space of a resisting medium. But such discussions as these are beyond the scope of the present paper.

One of the most interesting comets that has ever come under the notice of astronomers was that discovered in 1826 by Biela, an Austrian officer, and ten days later, independently, by Gambart. The latter determined its period of revolution to be about seven years, and accordingly its speedy reappearance was predicted, and duly observed in 1832. It was in this year that great terror was aroused among the ignorant by the announcement that the comet would pass close to the earth's orbit. The earth itself was millions of miles away at the time; but this did not diminish the alarm. It was thought that our orbit might be deranged, as though, as

Guillemin remarks, it were something tangible, as, for example, a metallic circle. It was not until M. Arago had published an explanation exposing the absurdity of the popular fears that the panic was allayed.

At the subsequent return of Biela's comet in 1846 it divided, under the very eyes of astronomers, into two distinct parts, which continued to travel side by side as separate bodies. Various curious phenomena were observed in connection with these twin comets, one being alternately brighter and fainter than the other, and the distance between them first increasing and then gradually diminishing. When they returned in 1852 they were more than a million and a half miles apart.

But this duplication was not the most wonderful part of the history of Biela's comet. In 1859 it was too unfavourably situated for observation, but in 1866 its return was eagerly watched for. But in spite of the most careful observation nothing was seen—it had disappeared! Nevertheless, its reappearance was sought for in 1872, but again in vain. But on the night of November 27th, in that year, a splendid shower of meteors was observed, and as this occurred at the time when the earth was passing across the orbit of the lost comet, little doubt could be entertained as to the connection of the two phenomena. Indeed, Mr. Pogson, at Madras Observatory, discovered what he believed to be the missing comet itself on December 2nd. There is much doubt even now as to the real relation between the meteor shower and the object observed by Mr. Pogson. Some astronomers declare that one of the twin comets actually touched the earth and caused the brilliant display of shooting stars which was witnessed throughout Europe, and that it was either this comet or its companion that Mr. Pogson afterwards observed at Madras. Others contend that this is impossible, as Biela's comet was due to traverse the earth's orbit twelve weeks before, and believe that the shower was rather due to our passing through one of the meteor clusters which follow on the comet's path. They consider the object seen by Mr. Pogson either to have been this identical meteor cluster or another on the same track, or possibly to have had no connection with the phenomena in question.

It is only fair, however, to state that the conclusive nature of the calculations on which this view is based has been called in

question, and some even assert that it is possible that the non-appearance of Biela's comet in 1866 was due not to its destruction, but to a mistake in the estimate of the period of its perihelion passage.

These are matters which have not yet been satisfactorily settled; but it is certain, at all events, that the destruction or dissipation of a comet by contact with one of the numerous meteor-rings, which doubtless exist in various parts of the solar system, is perfectly possible. Indeed, it is not improbable that the division which Biela's comet underwent in 1846 was due to some such cause. Altogether, the history of this body has been one of the most remarkable in the annals of astronomy.

Biela's comet is not the only one with which meteor systems have been proved to be connected. The well-known August meteors follow the track of one of these bodies, and those observed on the 13th and 14th of November are due to the passage of the earth across the orbit of Tempel's comet.

In order to describe consecutively the successive reappearances of these periodical comets, we have been obliged to anticipate the order of chronology and omit mention of several famous comets to which we now return. In 1744 a remarkable comet was observed by Chéseaux which had six distinct tails spread out like a fan. It was visible in full daylight, and surpassed many stars of the first magnitude in brilliance. Another known by the name of Lexell appeared in 1770, and its period was determined to be about five years and a half. Nevertheless, it has never been seen again, and its non-appearance has excited great interest among astronomers. The most usually received explanation is that the form of its orbit was changed by the influence of Jupiter, near whose system it passed.

One of the most celebrated of modern comets was that of 1811-12, discovered by M. Flaugergues, which was a conspicuous object in the sky throughout the night for many weeks. Its aphelion distance is calculated to be fourteen times that of Neptune, and its period more than three thousand years. The excellent vintage of the year was attributed to its influence, and the wine produced from it was known as the Comet Wine. It was this comet which spread such alarm throughout Russia, and was believed to be

a presage of the disastrous invasion of Napoleon.

We now come to Donati's comet of 1858, which will not easily be forgotten by those who witnessed the splendid appearance it presented during the autumn months of that year. It was remarkable for the brilliance of the nucleus and the graceful curve of the tail, and also for the presence of two faint luminous trains or jets in addition to the main appendage.

The great comet of 1861 created considerable sensation by the suddenness with which it blazed out, and the shortness of the time during which it was visible in our latitudes.

It was conspicuous for its brightness, which equalled if not surpassed that of Donati's comet, and for its beautiful multiple tail shaped like a fan. It is now generally admitted that on June 30th, 1861, the earth passed through the tail, and a peculiar phosphorescent mist was noted on that night by several independent observers. This circumstance is an interesting comment on the popular fears as to the result of a collision with a comet.

We ought not to omit to mention the comet discovered by Coggia in 1874, which was the first of any brightness which was subjected to spectroscopic analysis. The curious changes in the shape of its tail and head also made it an object of interest to astronomers.

Finally, the comet which for some time past has been visible in the early morning has several points which deserve notice. It is probably the same as that which appeared in 1843, and on that occasion was observed in full daylight, and it is also identified with that of 1668. In 1843 its perihelion distance from the sun's surface was only thirty thousand miles—less than that of any other known comet, and on September 17th and 18th of the present year it approached even nearer than this, passing therefore far within the limits of the sun's atmosphere. Its orbit is diminishing like that of Encke's comet, so that an interval of only two years has elapsed since its last appearance in 1880. The greatest length of its tail was forty million miles, and altogether it is the most noticeable object that has appeared in the skies since 1858.

With this comet we must conclude our survey. Into the numerous interesting problems connected with the nature of these wonderful phenomena, their origin, their physical constitution, their connection with meteor-systems, and many other

questions of the same kind, we cannot enter here.

When it is remembered that we have only enumerated a few of the most conspicuous of the comets which have visited the neighbourhood of the earth; that for every one visible to the naked eye there are many which are seen only through the telescope; and that probably for every one detected by terrestrial astronomers there are thousands which escape observation altogether, we arrive at some faint conception of the profusion with which they are scattered throughout the universe, and realise the literal truth of the saying of Kepler that "Comets are as numerous in the heavens as fishes in the ocean."

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER IV.

SUCH was the hold that Geoffrey Stirling, junior partner in the Becklington Bank, had over the hearts and sympathies of the people among whom he had lived from a child, that before those craftily conducted investigations which ended in nothing were fully concluded, it was mooted whether no possibility existed of enough depositors coming forward to set the banking business once more afloat.

Even Sir Roland, amid those curses loud and deep with which in his wrath he pelted the air, had ready a hot and spasmodic sympathy for the master of the White House, and his delicate sailing wife, "a creature like a bit of egg-shell china, more fit to be looked at than handled, and needing every comfort money can give to keep the life in her—ought to be kept under a glass case instead of having to rough it, as may be she must now—poor soul!"

Beauty in any shape always appealed to the hearty old squire, and Mrs. Geoffrey's dainty, faded loveliness had enlisted his sympathy.

"It's hard on the little fellow too," he said; "by gad! a bonnie boy that any father might be proud of. It's no wonder Geoffrey worships the ground he sets his little foot on."

Since any water Sir Roland saw fit to throw upon the scheme for bolstering up and resuscitating the bank was only tepid, not cold, the design might have gathered

consistency and become an organised plan, but for the sudden and unlooked-for news of Alison Stirling's death in London.

It appeared that the excitement of ill-news, the wound got by a nature that had been strict and honourable in every dealing throughout a long and active life, had caused such mental disturbance that erysipelas in the head had supervened upon the operation before alluded to as having been performed upon the eyes. Muttering of figures, ledgers, deposit accounts, interest due, and such-like topics—always fancying himself called upon to pay over vast sums, to meet which demands he had little or nothing in hand—Alison Stirling passed away.

Not, however, before his nephew Geoffrey had, by travelling post haste, reached his bedside, and been recognised by a faint and fitful smile. After that, as though some chord had been set vibrating by the sight of a familiar face, and the sound of a well-loved voice, one name was for ever on the dying man's tongue.

"Ralph—what of Ralph?" he would whisper, with weary head moving from side to side. "Poor little fellow! Geoffrey—Geoffrey—what of Ralph?"

Then the gleam of consciousness would fade, like a sun-ray behind a cloud, and Ralph was for a time forgotten, as vague disquieting fears and recollections of spectral liabilities crowded, a motley, ghostly crew, upon the darkening mind.

So Alison Stirling died and was buried, and Becklington stood by, in a calm surprise born of a succession of astonishing events, as might a man stunned into stupor by a shower of missiles.

After this all idea of resuscitating the banking business died out, and the squeezed-up building in the corner of the market-place was purchased by a steam-ship company. Mr. Geoffrey avowed his determination of retrenching all expenses and living in the simplest manner possible (indeed nothing but simplicity was possible) upon the small fortune inherited some years back by his wife from her father. This, with management, would keep up the White House and educate little Ralph, and in time doubtless Mr. Geoffrey would "take to" some other mode of adding to his income.

If he did so, none knew in what the mode consisted. He went often to London, or at least what was considered often in those days. He lived abstemiously,

displayed little yearning for the society of anyone beyond his wife and child, and Dr. Turtle, with significant shaking of the head and emphatic pinches of snuff, lingeringly inhaled, said to confidential friends that Geoffrey Stirling was more shaken than he (Dr. Turtle) liked to realise, by that sad business—"quite so, you understand to what I allude?—exactly so."

Anthony Geddes, meanwhile, was like a dove without an ark, or a dog who has lost his master. The firm had melted away, the house no longer existed, and the poor old fellow felt as though the solid ground beneath his feet had suddenly turned to bog-land, and the stars in their courses come to a sudden full stop and toppled over into space. A wealthy corn-factor in the town had offered him the post of book-keeper, and Anthony accepted it, for the "missus" must be kept in comfort in her old age, and if she had been torn away from the square house with its dual square gardens, she would have dwindled and drooped like a plant transplanted into uncongenial soil.

But Anthony never went heart and soul into his new work. He did it well from the mere mechanical habit of doing whatever his hand found to do with the best energies which had been given him; but he was a corn-factor's book-keeper under protest, and with his outer shell only. Inwardly he was still the manager of Stirling's Bank, and all his old geniality and fervour only woke into life fitfully—that is, whenever he chanced to meet Master Geoffrey.

The boy Davey went to lodge with Mr. and Mrs. Geddes, and was cajoled by the blandishments of the latter into doing a little amateur gardening in the summer evenings, such as pruning the standard roses, or leading the honeysuckle in the way it should go above and around the porch.

Davey had readily obtained an accountant's place in a mercantile house, and, though Anthony shook his head (looking upon commercial enterprise as a sad come-down after financial), showed signs of making a name for himself among the merchants of the place, and being one day promoted to greater things. But, for all this, he still looked upon Geoffrey Stirling as his "master," still carved pretty toys for Ralph out of white wood, and still spent occasional hours of delight and joy unspeakable at the White House.

Mrs. Geoffrey, as might have been expected, took all the troubles that had

come upon her in very ill part indeed. Was she not a woman with some pretension to elegance? Had she not been the first person in Becklington to introduce the now fashionable spoon-dish as an adjunct to the mahogany tea-board? Was not her hair always dressed at least six months in advance, with regard to style, of that of any other female head in the town or out of it? Had not her calash been spoken of as more modish and becoming than other head-gear of the kind?

Such pretensions as these were not things to be lightly foregone, nor yet could they be indulged in satisfactorily without an audience.

The secluded life now clung to by her husband was, therefore, most obnoxious in Mrs. Geoffrey's eyes, and more than once did she burst into tears just as Nurse Prettyman succeeded in piling her soft curls of pale fair hair to an unprecedented height, as who should say: "Of what use is all this fair adornment, since I live the life of a mole in its burrow?"

It must be allowed that Geoffrey Stirling tried all he could to shift the burden of the changes that had come upon them on to his own shoulders, and that a very small share of curtailment in luxury fell to his wife's share, while, as to his gentleness to and ceaseless tendance of her, his never-failing patience with her fretful repining and hourly self-pityings, Nurse Prettyman felt that uplifted hands and upraised eyes were alone capable of adequately expressing them.

"Was ever such a husband seen?" cried Becklington.

And thus two years passed on. New subjects of general interest arose, jostling aside the old. The wound was healing to a scar; the bank robbery was becoming a memory—not forgotten, but ill-defined, its outlines blurred, its smaller details growing dim.

Even Gabriel Devenant's tragic end was seldom alluded to in any more definite manner than by the adjective "poor" being used as a prefix to his name, while over Alison Stirling's grave flowers grew thick, planted and tended by the hand of old Anthony, as a sort of last tribute to the past glories of the house and the one-time importance of the firm.

Meanwhile, at Dale End, things had been going badly. They had not gone so remarkably well before the bank robbery that they could afford to take a worse turn after. Yet it seemed as if a cloud of ill-

fortune, darker and denser than any that had preceded it, fell upon the old squire and his household as a melancholy sequel to the losses he then sustained. The "beautiful fellow," with the star shining on his breast, whom little Ralph loved to look upon, the son and heir of the ancient house of Ashby, went from bad to worse, dragging down with him the fortunes of his kith and kin. Idle days and roystering nights followed each other in fell succession. Finding Becklington too limited an area for his debaucheries, the unhappy young fellow betook himself to London, there plunged into the wildest excesses, and was rescued "by the scruff o' his neck," as Farmer Dale put it, by the family solicitor, but not without heavy mortgaging of the family acres, and considerable dipping into the family coffers.

"He was nigh bein' sent over the high seas—transported, as I hear," said the chief constable, speaking as one versed in criminal records, and choke-full of trials, sentences, and such-like.

"If I'd ha' been t' ould squoire, I'd ha' let him be transported," said Farmer Dale; "happen' it 'ud ha' done him good to work for his victuals once in a way, and I tell you what it is—t' ould squoire's a noisy chap, and can bellow as loud as my short-horn bull when he's put out, but his heart's breakin' wi'in him, same as if he wer' t' peakiest weasen-faced felly i' Becklington—aye, that is it! As for Miss Alice, she's as like her own ghost as two peas, and when I hear her say, 'Grant us Thy peace' of a Sunday mornin' along wi' the rest of us, I'm ready to choke over the next Amen, thinkin' of her poor wan face as she prays for what the Lord has set far from her. Aye, but it's a good thing, and a thing to make glad over, as t' lad's mother lies where the ill words spoke of her boy conna reach her!"

Truly such ill words were many; even Dr. Turtle (who as the family physician at The Dale felt bound to make the best of everything, the scapegrace son included) had to admit that young Ashby was misled, and that Miss Alicia's state of health had "lost tone" in consequence. At last, coming from no one knew where, and originating with no one knew whom, a strange suspicion crept about, and in and out, and into this house and that, that Squire Ashby's son had had some hand in the bank robbery.

Such an idea was never mooted openly; never discussed in conclave at The Safe

Retreat, talked over across counters, or "across the walnuts and the wine;" but it was hinted at with bated breath, and when next Sir Roland's son visited home, no cap was lifted as he passed through the streets of Becklington, and Jake was so engrossed with his cobbling when the young squire bid him "good-day" that he forgot to return the salutation.

"Turtle," said the object of these slights, to the family doctor, "what the devil do the townsfolk mean by such conduct—eh? That little weasel, Jake the cobbler, made believe he didn't see me to-day, and when I went into the bar of The Safe Retreat last Saturday, the place emptied like a cask with a hole in it."

But Dr. Turtle, having no explanation to give, could only bow and take a pinch out of his silver box.

How the rumour in question reached the ears of Sir Roland himself no one knew, but reach them it did, and Miss Alicia, coming into the gun-room, found the poor old fellow sitting by the table with his face buried in his hands. The poor woman, frightened and trembling, came to his side, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

The cruel story had made its way to her, and, as she sat in the old square pew in the chancel of a Sunday, she scarce dare raise her eyes from the book in her hand, and could only raise her heart in prayer to the heaven that seemed so far away, and the God who seemed to have forgotten her.

Now, it came upon her like a blow to see that her father knew of that silent accusation.

"Father," she said, bending down to him tenderly, "what is it?"

He raised his head, lifting to hers the haggard eyes that were full of mingled wrath and pain.

"It's this, my girl," he said, bringing his fist down upon the table like a sledge-hammer; "it's this—I wish you and I were out of this place never to set foot in it again!"

And then Sir Roland broke out crying like a child.

But, even now, the worst had not come. The cup of sorrow was not yet full.

Hardly had these days of trouble passed over the heads of Alicia and her father, when news came of fresh evil wrought by the hand of the brother and son.

The family solicitor rushed up north, and, when he returned south, Sir Roland went with him. Alicia, more than ever like her own ghost, wandered about in the

beautiful terraced gardens, and under the spreading trees around her desolate home.

She was not always alone. Ofttimes a manly voice strove to comfort her anxiety, a manly hand clasped hers with a touch that seemed to hold the gift not only of comfort but of strength.

For eight long years the vicar of the square-towered church—he whom little Ralph so envied as being the owner of the rookery and rooks—had loved Alicia Ashby, and Alicia Ashby loved him. The vicar was a handsome, genial divine, hearty of voice, generous of nature; a man who loved to ride across country in top-boots and spurs, and yet could be gentle as the gentlest beside a sick bed, or when called upon to minister to a mind diseased. His curly locks, slightly grizzled at the temples, clustered about a square and noble brow; his smile disclosed teeth white as ivory; his eyes looked all men fearlessly in the face, yet could soften with infinite pity when they rested on the suffering or the sinful.

For eight years he had played countless games of dominoes with Squire Ashby, while Alice, moving softly about the room here and there, made him feel as though music were in the air, making the whole world sweet.

When he said to her (it was one evening under the big cedar on the lawn; Sir Roland had fallen asleep after dinner, with his bandanna over his head, and a perfectly unsuspecting heart in his breast), "I love you, but is there any need to tell you that I do, Alice?" she had laid her hand in his, and raising eyes that shone lambent in the dusk of the shadowy tree, said simply:

"There was no need to tell me what I knew, Cuthbert, and yet I like to hear it. It is wrong and selfish of me to like it, all the same; for, though I love you dearly (is there any need to tell you that I do?), I cannot leave my father, or set anyone before him in my life."

Then came a silence which Alicia broke.

"And you," she said softly, "what will you do?"

"Wait," he answered, touching the hand he held with lips that trembled ever so little, for all his voice had been so firm, and brave, and steadfast.

How many tears had Alicia shed since that dear time? Poor eyes, they scarce could shine out in the dusk now as they had done then—so dim were they with weary vigils full of fear and dread!

As for the vicar, he was waiting still. Not mopingly, but with as good a grace as he did everything else; riding as hard, working as hard, preaching the same pithy practical sermons as ever, and with no more tangible companion in his vicarage than a dream-woman who moved about the empty rooms with the same dainty grace as Alicia Ashby, stood beside his chair of an evening, or came to meet him at the ivy-covered doorway when he returned from a long day's ride after the hounds, smiling a welcome with shadowy lips and the lambent eyes that had looked into his beneath the cedar-tree so long ago. Now that troublous days and dark had come to Alicia, the heart of her patient lover clave unto her more tenderly than ever. What hand draws heart to heart so closely as that of sorrow?

"What should I do without you, Cuthbert?" she said to him one night when a letter from Sir Roland had come to hand, written in such haste and anger as to be scarcely legible.

"I hope you will not have to try," he answered, walking by her side with his hands folded behind his back, an attitude habitual to him; "you are not likely to have to do so—while I have life."

"And yet it seems a hard bargain, dear, an unequal one too; for I am not alone in the world, like you. I have my dear father, and you have nothing."

"Nothing?" he answered, smiling; "have I not hope? A man can live on a very small allowance of that diet, if he sets himself to do it with a will."

But he drew a long breath as she turned aside to pluck a rose, and the folded hands were clasped one in the other with a strained and nervous pressure.

After all, the diet of which he spoke so cheerily was more like starving than living, and he was conscious of a sharp pang of heart-hunger now and then.

"Do you think father will manage to set things straight this time?" said Alicia, anxious and wistful, as they took another turn, passing under the cedar-tree that had been the confidant of their first confessions.

"I can hardly say yet," said the vicar; "his letters have a tone I do not like. My darling, you have been so brave and good all along, you have been such a staff and stay, and dear true comfort to your father all through this bitter time, you must not falter now."

"But this—this cruel rumour about the

robbery? Oh, Cuthbert! it cannot be that my brother had any hand——"

"Hush!" he said, standing still and facing her; "I will not let you harbour such a thought. You have enough of real sorrow to meet, without setting yourself to fight with phantoms. There was not—there never has been one iota of evidence to connect your brother's name with that foul crime; the thing is a mystery, but of one thing I am well assured: this rumour that so troubles you is an idle foolish fancy, and will pass. You know the proverb about giving a dog a bad name? Well, dear, it is always so; the known sinner is made a scapegoat for the sins of the unknown."

He saw that she was weeping quietly as he spoke, and thought it well to let that gentle rain of tears flow on. Her nerves were shaken, her mind strained to the utmost by fears of she knew not what.

A few days later those fears took tangible form and shape, and Alicia knew that she must henceforth be a stranger to her childhood's home.

Sir Roland had found it impossible this time to "set things straight" without a sad and costly sacrifice, the nature of which a paragraph in the county papers promptly sent forth.

"Dale End, with its manor and lands, is in the market. Dale End has a history and an interest peculiarly its own. It appeals to us, as it were, from the dead past. It can tell of doings dating far back in the history of England; in the history of Yorkshire. It has belonged to the Ashbys for many generations, and everyone must regret that a necessity should have arisen for such a fine old property to change hands."

Cuthbert Deane carefully smuggled this notice out of Alicia's sight, and it may be hoped that neither she nor her father ever saw it.

What would they have done without the good vicar when it came to preparing for flight, when the dear household gods, which had been known and loved for a lifetime, had to be removed?

"I shall always think of the old spinet with little Hilda seated there, touching the keys as if they were living things, and she was afraid of hurting them," said Alicia to her patient lover.

"So shall I," he said, sighing, and taking her hand into safe and close keeping; "and I shall think of the song you taught her, and how prettily she sang it, catching every

turn and trick alike of words and melody. Do you remember—dear?

"Love is not a feeling to pass away
Like the balmy breath of a summer day;
It is not—it cannot be—laid aside,
It is not a thing to forget——"

May be those passionate pleading words found too keen an echo in her own breast. At all events, she put out her hand as though to ward off something she feared, and stopped the vicar in his too apt quotation.

"Don't," she said; "oh, don't!"

He was silent at her bidding.

They were both silent, for the parting was so near that its shadow was upon them.

"I feel as if I should be lost in great, busy London," said Alice at length; "perhaps as if I should be a little glad to be lost—from all but you, Cuthbert; but you—what will you do?"

"I? I shall go on waiting, and feed on the diet of which I told you once before."

There was a little sob in her voice as she answered him:

"Is it not rather a meagre diet, dear?"

"It is enough to keep life in me, and I like it, meagre though it be, better than the fullest any other hand could give me."

By way of reply to this, her lips touched the hand that rested on her shoulder.

A few days later and the Ashbys had left Dale End for ever, while the vicar set himself anew to the task of waiting, with only the dream-woman to keep him company.

For some considerable time no purchaser was found for the valuable property now in the market.

Possible purchasers appeared and had important interviews with the family solicitor, but never became actual possessors; the while Dale End cut rather a lugubrious figure, with barred windows, neglected gardens, and empty stables.

True, the vicar sometimes strolled in the grounds, or sat under the big cedar-tree to smoke his evening pipe, but he could hardly be said to enliven the scene, since he looked more like a lonely rook from his own rookery than any livelier bird.

One fine morning in the earliest spring days of the following year, Dr. Turtle (newly broken out into an ecstasy of loyalty in consequence of the girl-queen having become a girl-bride, and bearing in his button-hole a spotless bridal flower) stepped jauntily over the stones of the market-place. New and awakening life was in the very air; a faint green mist

that meant a thousand thousand tiny spears of springing corn, was rising from the rich red soil. Here and there pale primroses peeped forth from under the hedgerows; while in Amos Callender's window snow-drops nodded their dainty heads at every passer-by.

There was something spring-like about the doctor too, so much so that to have seen a new growth on the tips of the hairs that composed his wig, would hardly have been a surprise.

Jake, a little blue about the nose (for the day was cold though bright) cobbling away on his bench, was quite ready for a gossip.

"Well, Jake, have you heard the news?" said Dr. Turtle with a suppressed twinkle in his eye; "this is a strange turn of Fortune's wheel in very truth!"

"Who's bin' turning a wheel, and what's the matter now, doctor?" answered Jake, whose blue nose made him cross; "as to news—there's bin such a glut of it i' Becklington this last two year, I make no manner of account of it. There's a voice within——"

"Never mind that voice of thine to-day, Jake. Keep thy breath to wish our fair young Queen a long and happy life—and wish Mr. Geoffrey a long and happy life, too, when you're about it."

"Why, surely, Maister Geoffrey hasna' gone and married Queen Victory, has he?" said Jake, who was bound to be contrary on this particular morning, and did not half relish having the utterances of that inner voice of his stifled so unceremoniously. "I dunnot see how that can be so, and he with a missus of his own already; for though it's true she's not much of a one, yet she counts for one—as things go. Why should I be wishin' Maister Geoffrey joy—eh, doctor?"

"Because he's had a fortune left him—because he's off to London this very day to claim it—because he'll be a man of wealth, of position, of influence in our town from this time forth—that's why you should wish him joy, Jake; and good reason too, man!"

Jake was fairly taken aback this time. He stared at the doctor with his mouth open, and found never a word to say.

The amazing news was true. An uncle of Geoffrey Stirling's had died in Barbadoes and left untold wealth to his little-known and never-seen nephew.

The amount of the fortune thus bequeathed in a most unlooked-for manner grew and expanded with each hour of that day.

Every one who told the story added something to it, until, by the time night closed in, Geoffrey Stirling was—according to what rumour said—one of the greatest millionaires of the time.

"And to think what a silly fule he's got tied to him to share it a'!" said Farmer Dale, slapping his thigh.

They had fine times in Becklington, talking over "Maister Geoffrey's" luck for many a day to come, and hearty were the congratulations that greeted him on all sides from high and low, rich and poor. As to Anthony Geddes and Davey, they fairly wept for joy together before they had done.

Such exaggerated and high-flown ideas of Geoffrey Stirling's new prosperity being entertained by people in general, it did not come as much of a surprise to anyone when it was announced during the summer of that year that Dale End was no longer in the market, because Geoffrey Stirling had become its owner.

All this happened eight years ago now, and Becklington had almost forgotten that Sir Roland ever reigned at the old manor, or that any other squire than Squire Stirling was ever looked upon as a power among them. For both Sir Roland and his scapegrace son slept the sleep that knows no earthly waking, and Cuthbert Deane's "waiting" was over.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXXIX. HOW THE LETTERS WERE RECEIVED.

WE must now describe the feelings of Mr. Scarborough's correspondents as they received his letters. When Mr. Grey began to read that which was addressed to him, he declared that on no consideration would he go down to Tretton. But when he came to enquire within himself as to his objection, he found that it lay chiefly in his great dislike to Augustus Scarborough. For poor Mountjoy, as he called him, he entertained a feeling of deep pity,—and pity we know is akin to love. And for the squire, he in his heart felt but little of that profound dislike which he was aware such conduct as the squire's ought to have generated. "He is the greatest rascal that I ever knew," he said again and again, both to Dolly and to Mr. Barry. But yet he did not regard him as an honest man regards a rascal, and was angry with himself in consequence. He knew that there remained with him even some spark of love for Mr. Scarborough, which to himself was inexplicable. From the moment in which he had first admitted the fact that Augustus Scarborough was the true heir-at-law, he had been most determined in taking care that that heirship should be established. It must be known to all men that Mountjoy was not the eldest son of his father, as the law required him to be for the inheritance of the property, and that Augustus was the eldest son; but in arranging that these truths should be notorious, it had come to pass that he had learnt to hate Augustus with an intensity that had redounded to the advantage both of Mountjoy and their

father. It must be so. Augustus must become Augustus Scarborough Esquire of Tretton,—but the worse luck for Tretton and all connected with it. And Mr. Grey did resolve that, when that day should come, all relation between himself and Tretton should cease.

It had never occurred to him that by redeeming the post-obit bonds, Mountjoy would become capable of owning and enjoying any property that might be left to him. With Tretton, all the belongings of Tretton, in the old-fashioned way, would of course go to the heir. The belongings of Tretton, which were personal property, would in themselves amount to wealth for a younger son. That which Mr. Scarborough would in this way be able to bequeath, might probably be worth thirty thousand pounds. Out of the proceeds of the real property the debts had been paid. And because Augustus had consented so to pay them, he was now to be mulcted of those loose belongings which gave its charm to Tretton! Because Augustus had paid Mountjoy's debts, Mountjoy was to be enabled to rob Augustus! There was a wickedness in this redolent of the old squire. But it was a wickedness in arranging which Mr. Grey hesitated to participate. As he thought of it, however, he could not but feel what a very clever man he had for a client.

"It will all go to the gambling-table, of course," he said that night to Dolly.

"It is no affair of ours."

"No. But when a lawyer is consulted, he has to think of the prudent or imprudent disposition of property."

"Mr. Scarborough hasn't consulted you, papa."

"I must look at it as though he had. He tells me what he intends to do, and I am bound to give him my advice. I

cannot advise him to bestow all these things on Augustus, whom I regard as a long way the worst of the family."

"You need not care about that."

"And here again," continued Mr. Grey, "comes up the question;—what is it that duty demands? Augustus is the eldest son, and is entitled to what the law allots him; but Mountjoy was brought up as the eldest son, and is certainly entitled to what provision the father can make him."

"You cannot provide for such a gambler."

"I don't know that that comes within my duty. It is not my fault that Mountjoy is a gambler, any more than that it is my fault that Augustus is a beast. Gambler and beast, there they are. And moreover nothing will turn the squire from his purpose. I am only a tool in his hands—a trowel for the laying of his mortar and bricks. Of course I must draw his will, and shall do it with some pleasure, because it will dispossess Augustus."

Then Mr. Grey went to bed, as did also Dolly; but she was not at all surprised at being summoned to his couch after she had been an hour in her own bed.

"I think I shall go down to Tretton," said Mr. Grey.

"You declared that you would never go there again."

"So I did; but I did not know then how much I might come to hate Augustus Scarborough."

"Would you go to Tretton merely to injure him?" said his daughter.

"I have been thinking about that," said Mr. Grey. "I don't know that I would go simply to do him an injury; but I think that I would go to see that justice is properly done."

"That can be arranged without your going to Tretton."

"By putting our heads together, I think we can contrive that the deed shall be more effectually performed. What we must attempt to do is to save this property from going to the gambling-table. There is only one way that occurs to me."

"What is that?"

"It must be left to his wife."

"He hasn't a wife."

"It must be left to some woman whom he will consent to marry. There are three objects;—to keep it from Augustus; to give the enjoyment of it to Mountjoy; and to prevent Mountjoy from gambling with it. The only thing I can see is a wife."

"There is a girl he wants to marry," said Dolly.

"But she doesn't want to marry him, and I doubt whether he can be got to marry any one else. There is still a peck of difficulties."

"Oh, papa, I wish you would wash your hands of the Scarboroughs."

"I must go to Tretton first," said he; "and now, my dear, you are doing no good by sitting up here and talking to me." Then, with a smile, Dolly took herself off to her own chamber.

Mountjoy, when he got his letter, was sitting over a late breakfast in Victoria Street. It was near twelve o'clock, and he was enjoying the delicious luxury of having his breakfast to eat, with a cigar after it, and nothing else that he need do. But the fruition of all these comforts was somewhat marred by the knowledge that he had no such dinner to expect. He must go out and look for a dinner among the eating-houses. The next morning would bring him no breakfast, and if he were to remain longer in Victoria Street he must do so in direct opposition to the owner of the establishment. He had that morning received notice to quit, and had been told that the following breakfast would be the last meal served to him. "Let it be good of its kind," Mountjoy had said.

"I believe you care for nothing but eating and drinking."

"There's little else that you can do for me." And so they had parted.

Mountjoy had taken the precaution of having his letters addressed to the house of the friendly bootmaker; and now, as he was slowly pouring out his first cup of coffee, and thinking how nearly it must be his last, his father's letter was brought to him. The letter had been delayed one day, as he himself had omitted to call for it. It was necessarily a sad time for him. He was a man who fought hard against melancholy, taking it as a primary rule of life, that, for such a one as he had become, the pleasures of the immediate moment should suffice. If one day, or, better still, one night of excitement was in store for him, the next day should be regarded as the unlimited future, for which no man can be responsible. But such philosophy will too frequently be insufficient for the stoutest hearts. Mountjoy's heart would occasionally almost give way, and then his thoughts would be dreary enough. Hunger, absolute hunger, without the assured

expectation of food, had never yet come upon him; but in order to put a stop to its cravings, if he should find it troublesome to bear, he had already provided himself with pistol and bullets.

And now, with his cup of coffee before him, aromatic, creamy, and hot, with a filleted sole rolled up before him on a little dish, three or four plover's eggs, on which to finish, lying by, and, on the distance of the table, a chasse of brandy, of which he already well knew the virtues, he got his father's letter. He did not at first open it, disliking all thoughts as to his father. Then gradually he tore the envelope, and was slow in understanding the full meaning of the last lines. He did not at once perceive the irony of "his brother's kindly interference," and of the "generosity" which had enabled him, Mountjoy, to be a recipient of property. But his father purposed to do something for his benefit. Gradually it dawned upon him that his father could only do that something effectually, because of his brother's dealings with the creditors.

Then the chairs and tables, and the gem or two, and the odd volumes, one by one, made themselves intelligible. That a father should write so to one son, and should so write of another, was marvellous. But then his father was a marvellous man, whose character he was only beginning to understand. His father, he told himself, had fortunately taken it into his head to hate Augustus, and intended, in consequence, to strip Tretton and the property generally of all their outside personal belongings.

Yes;—he thought that, with such an object before him, he would certainly go and see Mr. Grey. And if Mr. Grey should so advise him he would go down to Tretton. On such business as this he would consent to see his father. He did not think that just at present he need have recourse to his pistol for his devices. He could not on the very day go to Tretton, as it would be necessary that he should write to his father first. His brother would probably extend his hospitality for a couple of days when he should hear of the proposed journey, and, if not, would lend him money for his present purposes, or under existing circumstances he might probably be able to borrow it from Mr. Grey. With a heart elevated to almost absolute bliss he ate his breakfast, and drank his chasse, and smoked his cigar, and then rose slowly that he might

proceed to Mr. Grey's chambers. But at this moment Augustus came in. He had only breakfasted at his own club, much less comfortably than he would have done at home, in order that he might not sit at table with his brother. He had now returned so that he might see to Mountjoy's departure. "After all, Augustus, I am going down to Tretton," said the elder brother as he folded up his father's letter.

"What arguments has the old man used now?" Mountjoy did not think it well to tell his brother the exact nature of the arguments used, and therefore put the letter into his pocket.

"He wishes to say something to me about property," said Mountjoy.

Then some idea of the old squire's scheme fell with a crushing weight of anticipated sorrow on Augustus. In a moment it all occurred to him, what his father might do, what injuries he might inflict; and,—saddest of all feelings,—there came the immediate reflection that it had all been rendered possible by his own doings. With the conviction that so much might be left away from him, there came also a further feeling that after all there was a chance that his father had invented the story of his brother's illegitimacy, that Mountjoy was now free from debt, and that Tretton with all its belongings might now go back to him. That his father would do it if it were possible he did not doubt. From week to week he had waited impatiently for his father's demise, and had expected little or none of that mental activity which his father had exercised. "What a fool he had been," he said to himself, sitting opposite to Mountjoy, who in the vacancy of the moment had lighted another cigar;—"what an ass!" Had he played his cards better, had he comforted and flattered and cosseted the old man, Mountjoy might have gone his own way to the dogs. Now, at the best, Tretton would come to him stripped of everything; and,—at the worst,—no Tretton would come to him at all. "Well; what are you going to do?" he said roughly.

"I think I shall probably go down and just see the governor."

"All your feelings about your mother, then, are blown to the wind."

"My feelings about your mother are not blown to the winds at all; but to speak of her to you would be wasting breath."

"I hadn't the pleasure of knowing her," said Augustus. "And I am not aware

that she did me any great kindness in bringing me into the world. Do you go to Tretton this afternoon?"

"Probably not."

"Or to-morrow?"

"Possibly to-morrow," said Mountjoy.

"Because I shall find it convenient to have your room."

"To-day, of course, I cannot stir. To-morrow morning I should at any rate like to have my breakfast." Here he paused for a reply, but none came from his brother. "I must have some money to go down to Tretton with; I suppose you can lend it me just for the present."

"Not a shilling," said Augustus in thorough ill-humour.

"I shall be able to pay you very shortly."

"Not a shilling. The return I have had from you for all that I have done, is not of a nature to make me do more."

"If I had ever thought that you had expended a sovereign except for the object of furthering some plot of your own, I should have been grateful. As it is I do not know that we owe very much to each other." Then he left the room, and, getting into a cab, went away to Lincoln's Inn.

Harry Annesley received Mr. Scarborough's letter down at Buston, and was much surprised by it. He had not spent the winter hitherto very pleasantly. His uncle he had never seen, though he had heard from day to day sundry stories of his wooing. He had soon given up his hunting, feeling himself ashamed, in his present nameless position, to ride Joshua Thoroughbung's horses. He had taken to hard reading, but the hard reading had failed and he had been given up to the miseries of his position. The hard reading had been continued for a fortnight or three weeks, during which he had at any rate respected himself; but in an evil hour he had allowed it to escape from him, and now was again miserable. Then the invitation from Tretton had been received. "I have got a letter. 'Tis from Mr. Scarborough of Tretton."

"What does Mr. Scarborough say?"

"He wants me to go down there."

"Do you know Mr. Scarborough? I believe you have altogether quarrelled with his son."

"Oh yes; I have quarrelled with Augustus, and have had an encounter with Mountjoy not on the most friendly terms. But the father and Mountjoy seem to be

reconciled. You can see his letter. I at any rate shall go there." To this Mr. Annesley senior had no objection to make.

NOTE.—The lamented death of Mr. Anthony Trollope will not in any way interfere with the continuation of "Mr. Scarborough's Family." The story was completed, and in the hands of the printer, some months ago.—EDITOR A. Y. B.

A LITTLE BIT OF FISH.

WITH rain pouring down in a persistent, hopeless way, while morning light feebly struggles through the blurred and misty chaos of night; with street-lamps shining in the wet asphalt as in some ink-black tarn, and along the wood pavement as a bordering of rough peaty morass; with the night-cab rattling wearily home, and the early workman more vigorously assaulting his master's shutters; with the homeless waifs of the night shivering under some poor shelter of projecting eaves; with the breakfast-stalls at the street corners, cans shining and cups clattering, the most cheerful objects in the surrounding waste, while the public-house close by, with one door tantalisingly opened in a painfully sober and even regretful mood, offers amends for the temptations of the night before in the announcement of hot coffee for early customers—with all these surroundings, what is the use of roving about with a soaked umbrella, and a general damp and dismal feeling, not being driven thereto by any inexorable necessity?

But then the appointment was made in broad sunshine—the appointment to meet at Number Five Hundred and Sixty-five stand in Bishopsgate dépot. "You're not to call it a market, you know," interpolates our friend with a knowing wink, "such not being permitted by the British Constitution." He is a very knowing little man, our friend with the wink, and hails from the east, where there are still some wise men left. From East Anglia—that is, from the land which is partly made up of shifting sea-sand and partly of condensed fogs and vapours from the Northern Sea—a man who is very knowing about fish, although not exactly a fishmonger, but ready to deal in that or any other commodity if there is money in it, with something of American smartness. Probably he is smart enough to stop at home this wild and windy morning; but, anyhow, it is a pleasant and comforting change from the wet and discomfort of Shoreditch to

the clean, dry, and resounding arches of old Bishopsgate Station. Clean they are, and white, and sweet-smelling with the scent of fresh-dug vegetables, of parsnips and carrots, and the aromatic celery; resounding, too, with heavy engines lumbering overhead, while outside brethren fresh from the fog and fen-lands shriek pathetically for admittance. But with all this tumult overhead, there is a cloistral quietude and stillness. Here all is warmth and shelter, with bright gas-burners overhead and dry solid pavement under foot. Here is a fine broad carriage-way, where a hundred carts might draw up, or perhaps a thousand costers' barrows, and upon the roadway open deep and commodious arches, where the produce of half a county might be stowed away. Behind these arches again, are lines of railway, where trucks can roll up and supply the cave at one end as fast as it is emptied at the other. This is the fruit and vegetable dépôt, and on the other side of the building is a precisely similar arcade devoted to the purveying of fish—space, comfort, cleanliness, in equal proportion. But, excepting a yellow cart marked "Ice," and a railway waggon with a load of empty crates, there is no vehicular traffic, and the footsteps of the writer echo emptily from the vault above—the footsteps of the only visitor from the outside world.

Stay, at Number Five Hundred and Sixty-five, talking in hushed tones to the owner of the stand, who is enclosed in a barricade of dried fish—kippers, bloaters, red herrings, Finnon haddocks, and salt cod, all highly respectable products of the deep, but not of a pressing nature nor requiring a visit at break of day—is my friend from the east countree, meeting reproof half way—for there had been visions of a fabulous pair of soles to be purchased at a marvellously low price—with the exclamation in deprecatory tones: "Ain't this a lovely place for business, only mark you it's all tentative as yet." Certainly here is everything that is wanted in a fish-market, except the fish and the people to buy them. And all that will come in time, says my sanguine friend. For look at the teeming population of the East End—a population, who, to judge from the whelks they consume, and the oysters when they can get them, and the mussels, and the countless saucers of stewed eels, are by nature fish-eaters, and would live and thrive on fish, if fish were comeatable. And look at this great dépôt in the very midst of them, and the other

end of it as it were on the very sea-coast by means of those blustering rumbling trains above, the coast of a sea that is teeming with all the best and most wholesome kinds of fish.

And can't supply a pair of soles to an unfortunate explorer who has come half-a-dozen miles to seek them! "My dear sir," cried the man of the east, extending his palms deprecatingly, "just think of the weather—a gale raging along the coast, and a sea that few boats could live in!" Yes, along the coast where the red and white lights from lighthouse, tower, and beacon-ship are just now paling in the sulky light—there the day is dawning over black and tumbled lines of billows—the sea drawing off and roaring in the distance, while on the patches of yellow sand, black and dismal hulls with broken stumps of masts are left to tell the tale of the lives of men who have been swallowed up in the remorseless waves.

With the thought of all this, the driving of the rain and the howling of the wind among the chimney-pots and house-tops assume a stern and melancholy cadence, as we wend our way towards Billingsgate. And long before we reach the precincts of the market there are signs that Billingsgate is itself, despite the weather, and in the full swing of its enormous traffic. Stray fishmonger's carts lurk about even as far as Gracechurch Street, and porters stagger about under heavy loads of fish. Eastcheap is lined with vehicles, men and horses patiently soaking in the rain. All down Fish Street Hill, the fishmongers are holding possession, while Monument Yard exhibits monuments of patience, horses and drivers sheltering as best they can from the pitiless downfall. But in Thames Street itself you have the true Billingsgate surrounded by the carts packed in a solid mass, the shouts, the cries, the oaths, the confusion, so that it is a relief to find shelter on a friendly wharf, and watch the scene more at ease. The turbid-tide that threatens to overwhelm the City; ships and barges that seem to loom menacingly in the air above; steamers threatening to paddle bodily over the wharves, all awash and afloat themselves; the rain-rivers gurgling in the gutters and spouting through the gratings; with all this a confluence, a congress, a congestion of fishmongers, fish-carts, and fish-porters, the City choked with horses and vans, while it seems as if only a few feeble dividing walls of brick hinder the whole cavalcade from

sailing bodily madly away on the top of the tide! A scene only to be rendered allegorically after the taste of the seventeenth century, Aquarius and Pisces both in the ascendant, with Boreas blustering in the background, and Father Thames and Neptune hand-in-hand rioting through the City.

And yet, with all its manifold inconveniences, it is impossible to withhold a tribute of admiration to the go and pluck and enterprise that exist about this dirty, fishy, insolent, bad-languaged, bad-mannered Billingsgate.

But on a stormy morning like this, when the big iron steamers that have come up with the tide, show in battered sides and broken bulwarks the struggle they have had with the fierce enemy outside, on such a stern and stormy day as this, how can the little fisher-boats fight their way to market?

To this my knowing friend replies that the little fisher-boats are not so very little after all; and that the trawling fleet that chiefly supplies Billingsgate is composed of smacks of thirty or forty tons, built with a special eye to speed and sea-going qualities; smacks that cost twelve or thirteen hundred pounds apiece, found like yachts, well manned, and fitted to keep the sea in any weather. And a couple of these smacks being full of fish have run for Thames mouth, and hailing a tug as we might hail a hansom in the Strand, have run up to Billingsgate and are now landing their cargo, and will make a good day's work of it. At the same time a carrier steamer which collects fish from all the fleet, has fought its way to port, and brings a plentiful supply.

Yes, they are cruising about the Dogger Bank just now these trawlers, no doubt. The Dogger is a submerged island, some twenty fathoms under water, a sort of little Britain in shape, with its sharp end pointing towards Norway, while the blunt end looks in the direction of the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire coasts, and this sunken plain—which is not so very little after all, being some hundred and fifty miles long by sixty broad, and which would make a very fine pasture if we could haul it up and tack it on to Lincolnshire—supports as it is a splendid flock of submarine muttons. They are muttons that follow no shepherd, and that require some catching; but then the trawl is just the thing for the purpose. A bag-net, in fact, some hundred feet long,

its mouth kept open by a wooden beam, with a kind of stirrup-iron at each end to keep the beam off the ground and the mouth of the net in a properly yawning condition. Below, the bight of the net, weighted by a heavy ground rope, sweeps together all the finny denizens of the plain it encounters on its course. The trawl warp, a six-inch rope a hundred and fifty fathoms or so long, is joined by two bridles to either end of the trawl beam, and at the other end of the warp the hauling smack tugs gently but firmly, moving with the tide, but a little faster than the tide so as to keep the net always distended. The trawl-net is shot at the beginning of the tide, and worked for five or six hours over some twenty miles of sunken plain, and is then hauled up. And the hauling up in rough weather is a ticklish and difficult process, costing two or three hours' hard labour. But when once the net is on the deck, and the trawl beam hauled safely out of the way, the pull of a rope empties all the contents of the net on the deck. Then the fish are sorted and packed in the wooden boxes without lids so well known to the frequenters of Billingsgate. Turbot, brill, soles, dories, and mullet are known as prime, and are always packed together, while plaice, haddocks, and whiting take a less honourable place as offal.

Now, fifty years ago this deep-sea trawling was hardly known, and such few trawlers as there were hailed from Brixham in the west, or Barking on Thames. And the 'long-shore fishermen have always made, and still make bitter complaints of the damage done to their fishing by the trawlers, in disturbing fish and destroying spawn. But there seem to be little reason in these accusations. Not only are there more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, but the more fish that are caught the better supplied seem to be the fishing-grounds. And as to the spawn, it has been shown pretty clearly by recent investigations that, in a general way—herring-spawn being the principal exception—the spawn of fishes floats on the surface, and cannot be damaged by the trawl-nets. The progress of trawling has been almost an unmixing good to consumers. The fish caught in the deep-sea are finer, better-flavoured, and more wholesome than those caught along shore.

The Brixham men were the first to carry out the propaganda of trawl-fishing. They, it is said, colonised Ramsgate with

the new school of fishermen, and the Ramsgate men now revive the glories of the Cinque Ports—there are no better fishermen or braver boatmen than these. Hastings, too, contributes good men and true, and has its own trawling-grounds, known as the Diamond Grounds, the Varne, and the Ridge, and from the North Foreland far into the North Sea. It is computed that there are nearly two thousand of these venturesome trawling-boats all round the coast, employing, perhaps, twenty thousand hardy seamen. But London is not by any means the metropolis of this business, and Billingsgate, if profitable, is precarious. Grimsby, by the Humber mouth, is now the great fishing port, and the Grimsby dealers are some of the smartest and most enterprising in the trade. Hull, too, has its fair share of fishing enterprise, which has increased much since the discovery of Silver Pit Bank at the south end of Dogger Bank, about the year 1845. There are "Pit seasons," as the trawlers call them, when, after severe winters, soles are congregated on these banks in almost incredible numbers.

"There!" interrupts our knowing friend from the east. "Incredible number of soles! Doesn't that make your mouth water, my good sir?" To which I reply morosely that I have never been any the better for these incredible numbers, and doubt very much if the fishermen were who caught them. Should we get a decent pair of soles for half-a-crown were they thick as blackberries on a hedge? I trow not. Some people would get the benefit of them, no doubt, but these people would neither be the hardy fishermen nor the patient British public.

And that brings us to talk of the Billingsgate of old, when it was really what could be called a market, where producer and consumer met and bargained without the intervention of middle-men—such a Billingsgate as we see in the prints of the last century, when fine ladies made parties to buy fish at Billingsgate. A pretty sight, one would think—the women in their fine dresses and wide-spreading hats, and the fishermen chaffing from their boats or hauling baskets of shining many-coloured fish up the steps. Or the Billingsgate of the old "Survey." "A large water-gate portico, a Harbrough for ships and boats commonly arriving there with fish, both fresh and salt, shell-fishes, salt, oranges, onions, and other fruits and roots . . . and in the summer season

with abundance of cherries from Kent. And these stairs are very much resorted to by the Gravesend watermen, being the noted place to land and take water for that and other eastern towns down the river. And here the coal-men and wood-mongers meet every morning about eight or nine o'clock, this being their exchange for the coal trade."

But at that date also there were grievous complaints about the prices of fish, and, although Billingsgate was made a free market by the Tenth and Eleventh of William the Third, yet it seems that fish-mongers would buy up all the fish, and sell it again at greatly increased prices. Thus there is an order of the Lord Mayor, 1707, "so that citizens may have fish at the first hand for their own use."

Now we can't turn back the hands of the clock, and probably the customs of the age do not tend to the revival of retail markets. But some alteration is wanted in the method of sale and distribution. The projected fish-market at Shadwell may do something to cure the evil, but it is to be feared that the ring of fish speculators is too strong to give any new market a fair chance. Only, as things go now, the boundless riches of the sea are dribbled out in amazingly small quantities by their purveyors.

COURAGE: A CHAPTER OF EXPERIENCE.

THIS is no essay. At Alexandria the other day, I heard of a seaman who cut off two wounded fingers—his own—with a jack-knife, and turned up for duty as usual. The jack-knife had been lately used for shredding tobacco, and, when the mutilation was discovered, this poor fellow's arm had fallen into such a state that the doctors feared they must cut it off.

The story reminded me of an incident which occurred within my knowledge more than twenty years ago; and that suggested others. I am not going to argue or theorise, but simply to hold the pen whilst memory drives.

A match to the sailor's plucky deed was that of Grimbold, a sergeant of Rajah Brooke's police. When the Chinese attacked his post, after a gallant resistance he jumped from an embrasure, and cut his way through the crowd. A bullet shattered his forearm. Grimbold borrowed a native sword, with which, and a small pen-knife, he amputated his limb at the elbow, tied

it up, and marched nearly two miles in an effort to join the Rajah. In custody at the fort, when the Chinese appeared, was a madman. Him Grimbald armed and posted. But the maniac refused to crouch under shelter. He swore that to hide was unworthy a brave man, and planted himself in the verandah, alone against a thousand. There he blazed away like the sanest of invulnerable epic heroes. When Grimbald decided to evacuate the place, the madman, unhurt, obeyed his call. But he refused to jump from a window, and the others left him eagerly unbarring a door that he might sally forth like a gentleman.

This man evidently understood the danger, but did not feel it. Some infirmities are great aids to nerve. I remember a war-correspondent, stone deaf, whose recklessness in pushing under fire, and coolness where the bullets flew thick, impressed the Turks, who watched him with a superstitious feeling. Wholly bereft of hearing, he could not recognise one quarter of the peril, and the awful din of battle affected him not at all. This gentleman made several campaigns, and was killed in Armenia, I believe.

The tricks imagination plays on courage are endless, sometimes kindly, more often cruel. Once on a time—the date is recent—a small English force lay for some days in a terribly exposed position. Experienced officers did not talk publicly of the ugly chances round. Two young fellows shared a tent; the one had seen much service in little time, the other was quite fresh, full of confidence, only longing that the enemy would show. He chaffed his comrade on his nervousness, until the latter, being also young, was tempted to open the youth's eyes, and showed how desperate would be their case under certain most probable conditions. After that explanation, he went to sleep; his fire-eating chum declares that he slept no more until circumstances changed. Of these young men, who behaved so differently, one has now the Victoria Cross; the second displays a medal with two clasps, and he won his company before his beard was fairly grown.

There are those incapable of fear, be the peril of what sort it may, savage man, disease, accident, death itself—the assured cessation of living. But they are very, very few; personally I have recognised but one. Many men and some women are proof against most dangers, but they dread one form, or perhaps several. In thinking of such persons, Scobeleff naturally recurs

to one's mind. He once declared to me that he was terribly afraid of mere death. He said also that his fearlessness was a habit, which, if poverty and a sense of ill-usage had not made him desperate, he would never have found courage to acquire. But Scobeleff loved a paradox—a reckless talker upon every subject, he was specially untrustworthy about himself.

I should rather incline to think that mere courage is more general amongst Russians than amongst any other people nowadays. I mean the unreasoning, irresponsible readiness of a dog to risk life and liberty upon provocation. Not more volunteers rush out, when a desperate enterprise is mooted, than from our own ranks; more than all is a mathematical absurdity. But the Englishman stakes his life in another, a grander spirit. He feels, and reckons with, the peril. Before meeting it, so far as I have seen examples, he is quiet, thoughtful, contemplating the worst, and making his arrangements. A Russian scorns all that, does not even think of it. After assuring himself, rather roughly, that the needful dispositions have been made, he becomes the lightest-hearted of the company to which he hastens. I do not say affects to become, for it may well be that deadly danger stirs him to mirth, as it stirs another man, equally brave, to self-commune. I cannot forget an instance on Radisovo Hill, the morning of the great attack. An infantry regiment stood at ease in the rain, waiting the order to descend into that valley blind with smoke, echoing with thud of guns and angry crackle of musketry. The colonel and a staff-captain approached, and asked us to accept charge of letters for their wives, to be forwarded in case of accident. Then they stood, chatting of London and Paris, with the warmth of men whose hearts were there, though the battle raged closer, and a ball now and then musically spun above our heads. They asked the precise story of a scandal half-forgotten now, and their shrewd comments told they were attending closely, when an aide came galloping through the mist. Three minutes afterwards the doomed regiment filed away, down towards the valley of death.

Baker Pasha loves to recount an instance of the courage we are used to think truly British. During his grand retreat, which the greatest of living soldiers declared "a master-work," it became necessary to fire a large Bulgar village.

Baker sent a company to do the work. Time passed, but no smoke arose. One after another he despatched four orderlies, to ask the cause of the delay; none returned. Then the general turned to his aide-de-camp: "Go, Alix," he said, "and see what those fools are doing!" Alix went full gallop, a Circassian behind. He did not come back, but the smoke appeared in thin wreaths. Every moment pressed. Baker sent another company, with another English officer. At the entrance of the village they found two orderlies dead, and no sign of troops. But the village, full of lusty Bulgars, was buzzing like a hive. They pushed on. In the middle space, the Chirkess stood, holding two horses; Alix, alone in a maddened throng, was moving from hut to hut, setting the thatch alight with matches. So the village was burnt, and the retreating Turks gained that delay which saved them—saved, perhaps, Stamboul, and so saved England from a desperate war.

I do not know that this story has been printed, though many have heard it. No one is more disinclined than I to single out persons for adorning my tale, when the name has not been officially announced; but the valiant deeds of a soldier in performance of his duty are excepted from the rule.

Of a class quite different was the fine devotion of Lord Gifford during the Ashanti War. He undertook the scouting for our advance, under conditions as unlike as could possibly be to those which usually attend such duties. We scarcely saw him after he had entered the woods. At the passage of the Adansi Hills, Lord Gifford paid us a visit, and he turned up, of course, at the battle of Amoafu, gaining his V.C., nominally, for valour displayed in the assault of Bequoi next day. But the reward was won before that, when he led his gallant little company miles in front of our outposts and advance-guards, creeping round the savage foe, cutting off stragglers to get information, watching from the bush at midnight such awful scenes as the bloody burial of Amanquattiah. Lord Gifford had with him, if I remember rightly, two West Indian soldiers, two Kossus, two Houssas, and a miscellaneous collection of barbarians, the wildest and most ferocious to be obtained on the recommendation of woodcraft and devilry. As we passed upon the march his lonely camps deserted, the fires long extinct in the circlet of piled boughs and entangle-

ments of vines, the least imaginative felt a shock—so lonely and lost they seemed in the shadow of the forest, between the savage enemy and ourselves.

Of all classes, the bravest certainly is the sailor. His way of life from childhood trains him to be fearless, to be very shrewd within a certain limited purview, to be open-handed of superfluities, to be instinctively conscious of his own interests and resolute in securing them. But all who have served with them ashore remark a characteristic of sailors, which, undiscussed and unanalysed, causes that want of confidence which nearly all soldiers feel in a naval brigade. English officers entertain it more than do others; as for Jack, his careless pride of self has not admitted it possible that a soldier could look down on him. But in foreign armies and navies the same idea prevails, to a less extent only because fewer instances of common service have suggested it. I am sure I know the reason, and it is as simple as can be. The better the sailor the more has he studied, and the more is he acquainted with, the dangers that threaten him at sea. A storm sweeps down with insufficient warning, or no warning at all; an enemy may appear on the horizon, coming out of space, as it were, and in an hour he may be fighting for life. The safety of all in a troublous time may depend on the wakefulness, the judgment of one man, and if there be a flaw in arrangements over which few or none on board have control, all is lost. Trained in such ideas until they become an instinct, the sailor goes ashore, to take part in military operations. He sees, as one may say, no man at the mast-head to give alarm. The position he is set to hold is isolated, or at least open on one side. The enemy is known to lie in overwhelming numbers somewhere about. Why should he not come down and overwhelm the fort? With the preconceived idea that soldiers are all more or less incapable, the officers of a naval brigade in such case are doubly convinced that the ship must depend upon itself. They raise redoubts and works; they dig like gnomes; cheerfully, yet with an injured sense, they keep sentry and picket guard in such extravagant fashion as sailors only could endure. The military officer observes them with polite derision. He knows, for instance, having studied the ground and the circumstances, that to advance from the direction which those good fellows are watching so zealously, an enemy must march three days without

water. He has confidence that although no look-out be visible, shrewd heads are employing active means, not less efficient, to ensure the general safety. He has no experience which teaches him to expect danger continually from powers and accidents unseen, unsuspected. In short, he is not used to storms, nor to the sudden appearance of hostile forces out of space, nor to a foe who carries with him wherever he goes all things needful for combat and subsistence. And he seldom reflects upon the difference of his education and the sailor's.

No one has ever questioned the supreme fighting zeal of a naval brigade, which in all countries, I think, is superior to that of soldiers. But again, if the rout come, after the seamen have done their best, their instinct betrays itself. I have never personally seen a *saue qui pent* of sailors, but I am told that it is much more hopeless than that of an army. And I should be inclined to believe so. For when the ship is obviously lost, men take to the boats, and that familiar discipline which keeps order in emergency at sea, is absent under the conditions of land service. The individuality which a sailor's life tends to encourage, and to suppress which is the tendency of the soldier's training, obtains freer control, and every man looks to his own safety.

The bravest race of savages, I think, amongst the many I have known, is the Montenegrin; but whilst I write, competitors recur to mind. Every square foot of the Black Mountain has its legend of desperate fight, often disastrous, but always honourable. A little instance of Montenegrin courage, which came under my own eyes is much prettier than any of the stories recounted by the wandering bard. Whilst Dulgino was threatened by European fleets and Montenegrin armies, the Albanians holding it, a dense smoke arose one day in that quarter. The news of this phenomenon spread widely, and caused a positive statement in all the morning papers of the civilised world that the Albanians had fired their town. At sunset, unable to get news, and the people being much excited, I hired a boat at Pristaw Antivari for the purpose of reconnoitring. A young officer had come down on business from the camp at Sutormana. He said to me: "What is the use of your going to Dulgino, when you are not acquainted with the language of your boatmen, and you don't know the country? Send a

message to Buko Petrovitch, the general, telling him I have gone in your boat to enquire. I will bring you news."

So I sent a note to the general, and forthwith his young officer started. At morning the boat returned, without him, but the men were charged to tell me that Dulgino stood just as usual. Presently the commandant came, laughing. He said: "Effendi, that youth has made fools of us. He wanted to see his sweetheart in Dulgino, and when the boat drew near, he swam to land. If the Ghegghes catch him, they'll flay him alive." I don't know whether they caught him, but he did not return whilst I stayed, nor did he rejoin the army, for Buko Petrovitch sent to ask about him, ten days afterwards.

Afghan courage is undeniable; but it belongs to the fervid class. In a headlong charge—for resistance to the death when that issue has been resolved beforehand—no people on earth excel the Pathans. But an accident will strangely disconcert their minds; they seldom fight a lost battle. The history of their wars is as full of panic-defeats as of heroic victories. The Piper of Jellalabad represents a type among them. At a certain hour every evening he used to climb a hill at the very limit of musket-range, blow his pibroch, dance his jig of defiance, and withdraw. An admiring retinue attended him, heedless of the shots which occasionally told. At length an English marksman killed the piper, whose renown will be preserved for generations in the name he gave that hill. After his death, not one of the hundreds who had seemed indifferent to peril, challenged our fire. Cases of the same sort frequently occurred in the last war. At Jamrud fort the sentries were potted at every night by the same man, or, at least by the same weapon, for its peculiar report was recognised. One night, as we sat in the mess-room, a detonation louder than usual drew our notice. In the morning we found a burst pistol, rifled, and from that time our sentries were no longer molested. Natives presently reported that the man was unhurt, but neither he nor his fellows resumed their firing practice.

In that reckless bloodthirstiness which contains, of course, a proportion of courage, but which is more properly described as devilry, the Pathan will not be out-Heroded. I do not speak of Ghazis, or "martyrs for the faith," who murder to win heaven, and accept death as

essential to the merit of the deed. The Afghan who, without vows or illusions, sees an opportunity to perform a desperate act which will bring him pleasure or profit, is not easily deterred by the danger of retribution. And he displays great presence of mind. Some English officers riding through the Khurd Khyber heard shots. They quickened their pace, and at a turn of the defile ran into a brisk skirmish. Three men were defending some loaded donkeys against an equal number who fired at them from behind the rocks. The former pushed on and claimed protection, declaring themselves peaceful traders attacked by banditti. The latter left hiding and hurried up to tell their story; whereupon the three first rushed at them and cut them down, killing all before they could speak.

It came out afterwards that these unfortunates were the owners of the goods and cattle, looted first and then murdered. This ugly tale reminds me of the death of General Maude's bheestie, who was filling his masak at the well not two hundred yards from Lundi Kotal camp, when the general passed with his escort. The well was much frequented, and some Pathans were seated there. Before General Maude reached the tents, his bheestie overtook him, and fell headlong in the road, cut literally into bits. An impulse of homicide had seized the Pathans, and they had allowed it play.

I do not believe in the courage of Bedouins, still less of Egyptians. But though we admit all the confidence which skill and tried success will bestow, it was a plucky feat to drive forty oxen from the lines at Kassassin and bring them into Tel-el-Kebir. That the Bedouin scouts performed this feat, as they boasted, has been vehemently denied, of course, but I am afraid the story is true. All the prisoners taken on the 28th of September declared it; some had seen the oxen, and they described them as foreign—certainly not Egyptian. They agreed, also, that the Bedouins' report was the cause of the attack which was made two days later—for it represented that the English camp was unguarded, that the troops were scattered, and so worn out by sickness that they could not stand a serious onslaught.

For courage and skill in looting cattle, no race of scoundrels can make a show with the Marris and other dwellers on the frontier of Sindh. The ingenuity of these

people is almost uncanny. They have a knowledge of the bovine character well worth scientific attention, and they use it in conjunction with a study of human frailties which is equally minute. The simplest of their processes is to cut through the stable wall—cattle are always stabled in a country so perilous for them—and lead out the animals. Two or three boys are entrusted with a business of this kind, and they are expected to succeed, though it be needful to make the oxen step over a watcher's body. At one of our posts the commissariat cattle were lodged in a walled enclosure, which contained several masses of ruin. Every morning the tale of beasts was short. In vain the distracted go-master applied for more sentries and more frequent rounds. At length, by mere accident, the secret of the nightly disappearances came out. Thieves had tunnelled under the wall, shielding either exit behind ruins. Such engineering work is familiar to people who conduct water underground from the spring to the place where it is wanted. But to induce half-wild cattle to descend a steep incline, pitch dark, hot as a furnace nearly, and that without making a suspicious sound, requires either arts unholy or such influence as one would like to observe in action.

The Arab proper, neither Egyptian nor Bedouin, is very distinctly a brave man in the European sense. I do not believe that his part in history is played out. In a very few years he will be free of his incubus, the Turk, the field of emigration open to his most active and enterprising sons will be terribly narrowed, and an Arab civilisation may again appear. All the soldierly feelings are strong in them now.

During the Russian War a young Arab officer was taken on the Lom. His gallantry in the action had been observed by admiring enemies, and one high in authority tried to get him freed or exchanged. He asked the prisoner's word of honour that he would not fight again if liberated, and it was given. Shortly afterwards a desperate opportunity of escape presented itself. The Arab seized it and got away. In the Turkish lines he was received with joy, and promoted then and there; but he refused to serve, recounting his promise. The general would not admit it binding, and threatened to shoot him, as a coward, in the back; and shot he was. A relation of the youth told me this story at Constantinople. I believe one might find many

Arab soldiers (not Egyptians) who would die rather than break their plighted word.

In the sum of military honour, no army is so punctilious as the German. That superb machine is braced and upheld by a code of such minuteness and severity as no other people would carry out. Crack regiments in the Russian service hold themselves together, and preserve the honour of the corps with strict vigilance, but their rules are fantastic, and still more so the execution of them. The doom of suicide has been passed upon a German officer, if stories are true, but in Russia it has been pronounced not once, nor a hundred times. For some terrible scandal, a cavalry regiment was exiled to Central Asia. It held an enquiry upon the officers implicated, and the one found guiltiest was significantly told that a man of honour would not survive the shame of bringing disgrace upon his uniform. In such a case, a German would, perhaps, have taken his own life quietly, but the Russian did nothing of the sort. On parade next day, he charged the colonel with drawn sword, and was promptly shot. I have been told that the proportion of officers who die a violent death in time of peace, in Central Asian stations, is enormous.

It is common clap-trap of the cosmopolitan philosophy, that every man is brave. The soldier and the traveller know better. Nearly every man can be trained to hold his place in the ranks, and most men will rush forward with their fellows, if there be enough of them, and they shout. But this is not individual courage. I am not sure we are as brave as were our forefathers, but, if so, other nations have deteriorated in the same measure, for we keep the relative position they held. Unfortunately, courage will not save a state, nor win battles nowadays, unless it be backed by force, and I am acquainted with no authority who does not admit in private that he regards the chance of a serious struggle with panic. If England maintained at home but a hundred thousand men ready for service abroad, what a blessed revolution that force would bring about! Free to ally herself on the side of right, whichever it were, she would be mistress and arbiter of Europe, which would needs disarm before this new power.

TO-NIGHT.

I SET myself as a task to rhyme

To-night;

For I knew that the hand of the olden time,
Had lost its might;

That the cadenced words that wont to chime,
As true,

And sweet as the bees in the murmurous lime,
In summer do,

Had grown as fickle, and cold, and shy,
As the sunbeams are in an autumn sky;

And so, because I loved the strain,
That used to ring for my joy or pain,
I strove to waken the spell again,
Of rhyme and rhythm and sweet refrain,
Nor heeded the bode, that sighed "in vain,"
To-night.

I sate alone by the blazing ingle

To-night,

And tried to fashion the musical jingle

For my delight;

Why should the soft sounds shun to mingle.

Aright,

Because I am old and sad and single,

In the hearth-light?

Why? Have I loved so well and long

The beauty of earth and the voice of song,

To forget at last how the rich red rose

Still droops on her stalk with the August's close;

That the bright beck stops in its ebb and flow,

As the ice-bar creeps 'neath the drifted snows;

And my heart takes the lesson that Nature knows,

To-night?

CHRISTMAS ROSES.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"If I tell you something, Belle, you must promise not to be angry."

"I'll promise to try. What is it?" asked Belle.

"I think, if I were you, I would give Mr. Kendal a gentle hint that absence from you should be a time of grief for him. Perhaps, though, it is, and that is the reason he would give for amusing himself with someone else."

"What do you mean, Carrie?"

"There, now, you said you wouldn't be angry."

"I'm not; I only want to know what your mysterious hints mean."

"Then I'll tell you. I've been staying near Farehurst lately, and I was told that Mr. Kendal was engaged to a Miss Thorne there. Of course I didn't believe it, as I knew he was engaged to you; but there must be some reason for a report of that kind, so I thought I would give you a friendly hint."

"Thank you; it's only a spiteful rumour, of course. Tom is as good a lover as I could imagine."

"I'm glad," replied Carrie, "that you don't take it seriously. But after all, Belle, take my word for it as a married woman, a lover is none the less careful if he knows that his fiancée keeps her eyes and ears open."

"I can trust him without playing the spy," returned Belle.

"I don't want you to take the next train to Farehurst and charge him with his falseness, or to go down and watch round Miss Thorne's house till Mr. Kendal makes his appearance at the front door. By-the-bye, that would be no use just now, for she has come to town I heard."

"When?"

"Yesterday. Where's Mr. Kendal?"

"At Farehurst. He won't be in town again for a week or two."

"I'm glad to hear that. Don't think too much of what I've told you; but I thought it was my duty to let you know."

The two ladies were talking in the twilight of a December afternoon. The large wood fire threw a rich glow into the room, the heat was so great that Belle was obliged to hold a large peacock-feather screen before her. Perhaps, though, as her companion guessed, this was done as much to hide her face from scrutiny as to shield her from the heat.

Belle had finished a long letter to her lover that afternoon, she was now considering whether it was not too affectionate, and whether a short postscript would not be an improvement. The point was still undecided when there was a ring at the door. A few moments afterwards, the servant announced Mr. Kendal.

Belle greeted him with a shade less than her accustomed warmth, but Kendal naturally put that down to the presence of a visitor. He was introduced to Mrs. Fletcher, but that lady soon took her departure, feeling that she was decidedly in the way.

"Don't make too much of what I said," she whispered to Belle as she said good-bye. "I shall come and see you again before I go back to Hertfordshire."

As soon as she was gone Belle turned to Kendal.

"I thought you were not coming to town for a fortnight?" she said.

"I didn't expect to, my pet, but business called me up, and I found I had time to run down and see you."

"When did you come?"

"Yesterday; but I couldn't get here before."

"Why didn't you write to tell me? I might have been out this afternoon."

"I didn't know till too late. I expected not to have a chance of getting as far as Hampstead; I knew you wouldn't like it if you knew I was in town without

coming to see you, so I said nothing about it."

"You must have had a cold journey; it was bitter yesterday. Were you alone?"

"No; I had a companion."

"Who?"

"A Miss Thorne. I don't suppose you have ever heard of her."

"Yes, I have. I suppose you saw her to her destination?"

"Yes, worse luck; I was let in for that, awful nuisance it was."

Kendal had by this time recognised the fact that the conversation had assumed a very unusual tone. When he met Belle as a rule, he found her unrestrainedly glad to see him; she overflowed with kindness, there was never a shade of unpleasantness. Now she was catechising him as if he had been committing some terrible fault.

"I say, Belle," he exclaimed, "what's the matter with you to-day? You seem rather annoyed that I've turned up, instead of glad to see me."

"I am rather out of sorts to-day," pleaded Belle. "But I'm very glad to see you."

They were sitting on low armchairs in front of the fire. He took up her screen and held it in front of his face.

"Does the fire hurt your eyes?" asked Belle.

"Yes; it is rather a conspicuous blaze."

"How have they been lately?"

"My eyes? Oh, thanks, I hope they'll be all right soon."

"I hope so, I'm sure," returned Belle. "Who is this Miss Thorne?" she continued.

It had crossed Belle's mind that it was a curious coincidence that he should have made an unexpected visit to town on the same day as Miss Thorne.

"Who is she? Nobody in particular; a very decent sort of girl who lives at Farehurst."

"Is she rich?"

"She's pretty well off, I believe."

"Where is she staying now?"

"With some friends at Clapham. But I say, Belle, why do you want to know about her? Are you anxious to write her biography?"

"No," replied Belle, "only I've heard about her."

"Who from?" asked her lover uncomfortably.

"Never mind; there are little birds who whisper in people's ears, you know."

"I know that if I got hold of one of

those precious little birds, I'd stop her singing for her. What has she whispered about Miss Thorne? For 'tis a she of course."

"She whispered to me that a certain gentleman pays a good deal of attention to her."

"Well, I expect a good many do; Miss Thorne's rather a beauty," replied Kendal.

"Yes; but the certain gentleman I mean is already engaged."

"You mean me, I suppose?"

"You are becoming intelligent at last."

"Is it a mark of intelligence to be ready to take insinuations affecting myself?"

"Can you, Tom, really, truthfully say that there is no ground for them?"

Kendal hesitated. Since he had become engaged to Belle he had only one thing to reproach himself with; that one was a flirtation with Miss Thorne. Rather less than a week ago she had discovered that he was engaged to a lady in London, a discovery that took her by surprise. She had told him of her discovery when next they met, and had not scrupled to add that she thought he was giving himself a good deal of latitude in calling to see her three times in a week; for Miss Thorne was an outspoken lady, and felt herself aggrieved by his deception. Not that she was at all in love with him; she was as far from that as possible; her sympathies were entirely with the forsaken and forlorn girl in London—as she chose to consider her. So during the last week Kendal and she had not met, and it was by pure accident that they had travelled to town together. It was also chiefly through her persuasion that he resolved to make time somehow to call on Belle.

"You mustn't be absurd, my darling," he said in reply to her direct question. "Down in a little country village, like Farehurst, people wouldn't know what to do unless they could employ themselves in inventing scandal. If two people happen to meet by accident once or twice a week, the rest of the village begin to discuss what the presents will be, and whether they will be married this year or next."

"You haven't answered my question," said Belle, when he had finished.

"If you are jealous of Miss Thorne, all I can say is that you have no need to be."

"Have I no reason to be either?"

"Not that I'm aware of. I haven't spoken to her for a week."

"Till yesterday."

"Till yesterday! Look here, Belle, what

is the use of going on like this? You know well enough that I don't care a straw for anyone but you. Why must you try and create unpleasantness in this way?"

"Whose fault is it?" asked Belle.

"Supposing that it were mine——" began Kendal, but Belle interrupted him.

"It is not a matter of supposition, is it?"

"Very well, say that it is mine; say that when I've been down at Farehurst I haven't lived the life of a hermit under a vow of silence, but have talked to anyone I met in the usual way; is that any reason why you should be annoyed? Miss Thorne and I are old friends, nothing more; scarcely that now, for we had a quarrel the other day."

"People must be intimate who quarrel," remarked Belle. "What was the quarrel about?"

Kendal did not answer.

"About me, I suppose?"

At this juncture the door opened, and the servant entered with a lamp. The fire had burnt down and the room was almost dark; the bright light coming suddenly made Kendal put his hand to his eyes.

"Shall I bring up tea, miss?"

"Yes, please."

The servant went out after pulling the curtains close. Belle went to Kendal and put her hand on his arm.

"Tom dear, I didn't mean to say all that I did. I couldn't have said it if it hadn't been dark. Now that it is light again, and I can see your face, I don't believe it so much as I did. Just say that you have never cared a bit for Miss Thorne, and I'll forgive you everything."

"I don't quite see what there will be to forgive in that case," said Tom with a laugh. "I must say good-bye now, my dearest, I've only just time to get back."

"Hallo, Kendal!" exclaimed Belle's brother Charlie, suddenly entering the room, "I didn't know you were here."

"I'm just off again," replied Kendal; "a flying visit."

"When are you going back? Can't you stop?"

"No, thanks; I must be off at once."

"That's a nuisance; good-bye."

Charlie had the grace to go out of the room, leaving the lovers alone. Kendal tried to give Belle a hasty kiss or two and then go; but she held his arm.

"You haven't answered my question, Tom," she said.

"Why, my little pet, how you do harp on that melancholy string. I don't care two straws for Miss Thorne; is that enough for you? Yes, of course it is! Now give me that Christmas rose as a mark of forgiveness."

But Belle did not take the flower from its resting-place. Voices were heard outside; more brothers were approaching. Kendal gave her a final kiss, whispered in her ear: "Give me a flower when you have forgiven me," and hurried away.

Belle snatched the Christmas rose from her breast and held it out, but it was too late.

CHAPTER II.

KENDAL did not go to Paddington to catch the train for Farehurst. He went to an hotel. He eat his dinner in the coffee-room, and then retired to his bedroom.

Though it was scarcely seven he undressed and got into bed.

He had not been there more than an hour when a visitor was announced, Dr. Farebrother.

"That's right," said the doctor, entering, "I'm glad to see you are wise. Tie a silk handkerchief over your eyes before you go to sleep, and submit to be fed at breakfast. You will be round at the hospital by eleven?"

"Yes, I shall bring a few things with me; how long do you think I shall be there?"

"I don't quite know; it depends on the success of the operation. I hope a week will be sufficient. It will be rather weary work for you, I'm afraid, but it can't be helped; you had better write to your friends to come to see you after the first day; I will arrange for their admittance. After all you will be quite as cheerful in hospital as alone in an hotel."

"Yes, rather more so."

"You've had no special pain to-day?"

"No, just as usual."

"Well, hope for the best; there's every chance of a perfect cure. Good-night. Eleven to-morrow."

"Good-night, doctor."

The solitary candle departed with the oculist, leaving Kendal in darkness. For the last six months he had been increasingly aware of the fact that something was the matter with his eyes; he had paid recently a visit to the celebrated oculist, Dr. Farebrother, who had advised an operation. He did not conceal from his patient that it would be a dangerous

one. There was a risk of losing his eyesight, but there was a certainty of its loss if no operation was performed. So Kendal determined to run the risk, and this journey to town was to undergo it. He had kept it a secret from Belle. Until it was over, and he knew the worst or best, he had resolved that she should be in ignorance of it. It was not a pleasant thought as he lay alone in the darkness, that he had that afternoon, for the first time since their engagement, parted from her without her giving him a kiss.

"Never mind," he thought, "she will be sure to send me a flower to-morrow, and all my letters will be forwarded to me from home."

It was by the oculist's advice that he was to undergo the operation in the hospital. "You see, Mr. Kendal," he had said, "in the hospital we have every possible appliance on the spot; we can administer the chloroform more satisfactorily, and after it is over you will have constant attention and care, more than you could possibly get from a nurse. Besides, the operation is a rare one, and you will be doing a service to science if you will let me perform it in sight of the students."

"In the hospital, then, by all means," Kendal had replied. "You have been accumulating unnecessary reasons; I'm quite ready to go wherever you wish."

At last the time was nearly come; he had, perhaps, seen daylight for the last time in his life. It was not the pleasantest thought in the world. However, he was young, and hope was strong within him; so he tried to believe that all would turn out for the best. He fell asleep about midnight thinking of Belle.

Four days after he was lying in a white-washed ward, in a bed which was the picture of neatness when he had entered it, but was anything but that just now. His head was wrapped in black silk, to keep any particle of light from reaching his eyes; he had not been shaved since the morning of the day on which he had seen Belle; his hair was tumbled about in all directions. He was getting very tired of lying there as helpless as a child, being fed by the nurse as if he were two years old. He had occasional visits from friends, but no relation was there; even his mother thought that he was in London on business. There was no end to be gained by letting them know; they would only have a week's anxiety which they would be better spared.

He was lying there wondering when the day would end, though the day was much the same to him as the night, when a nurse approached.

"There are some letters for you, sir, if you would like them read to you."

Kendal having assented, the nurse opened them; they had been sent on from the hotel at which his parents thought he was staying. Three were of no importance; the next was one from his sister. It was very interesting to him from the first word to the last; to us a paragraph will be sufficient:

"News has just reached us that Miss Thorne is engaged to Mr. Cartwright, the son of the great millowner and M.P. I'm very glad to hear it, and I hope you won't be sorry. When do you expect to be able to return home?"

Kendal gave a sigh of relief as the nurse read this paragraph; he would be able to convince Belle now that her fears were unfounded, and free himself from the necessity of confessing that his conduct had not been quite what it should have been.

"Are there no more?" he asked as the nurse finished.

"No, sir; this is the last."

"Thank you," said Kendal. How was it, he wondered, that Belle had never written him a line, had never sent him a flower as a sign that she had forgiven and forgotten their first misunderstanding? He could not guess.

The reason was that Belle had discovered that her lover had not returned to Farehurst, as he gave her to understand he was about to do when he parted from her. The day after their quarrel she had intended writing to him to tell him how sorry she was that she had said what she had; she had even saved the identical Christmas rose to send him as a token of reconciliation, when she heard that he was still in London. So Belle had not sent the flower or even a letter. She had determined to wait till he wrote.

Two days more dragged their interminable hours along; Kendal was still in total darkness. However, on this day Dr. Farebrother made a careful examination of his condition, and informing him that there was no doubt about the success of the operation, told him that by next day he might hope to have his first glimpse of light again. Kendal felt a great load lifted off his mind. He need no longer look upon himself as a possibly blind man.

But now that his mind was relieved on that score the mystery of his receiving no letter from Belle became all the more pressing. Did she intend to make a regular quarrel of their misunderstanding? If so he was helpless till well enough to go and see her.

He was still meditating on this subject, when he heard footsteps approach his bed. They stopped before they reached him, and he heard a short conversation between his next neighbour and the visitor. The latter then came to him.

"I don't think I've seen you here before," said a soft voice; "the nurse tells me that you have had an operation on your eyes; shall I read to you for a little while?"

What were Kendal's feelings when he heard close to him the voice of Belle. For a moment he was undecided whether to wildly try to grasp her hand and bless her for coming to visit him in his loneliness; but he restrained himself. Evidently she did not recognise him—which was not to be wondered at. It would be wisest to proceed cautiously. Perhaps he might make something out of her visit.

"Thank you kindly, miss," he replied to her question. "I'd sooner hear you talk if you don't mind. I never was great at reading."

He assumed a country accent, and Belle was quite deceived.

"Very well," she said, "though I haven't long to stay to-day. When do you expect to be well again?"

"I hope as how a week will see me home again, miss."

"I hope so, I'm sure. Where is your home?"

"Not so far away, miss; 'bout sixty miles. Have you ever heard on Farehurst?"

Blind though he was, Kendal was aware of a start on Belle's part.

"Yes," she replied after a moment's hesitation. "I have a friend living there. I wonder if you know her."

"What's her name, miss? I know most of the folk thereabouts."

"Miss Thorne."

"Miss Thorne of The Grange?"

"Yes, I believe so; the one who is rich."

"Both on 'em's rich, miss."

"The young one."

"Both on 'em's young, miss."

Belle stopped. She had almost come to the end of the distinguishing characteristics of the Miss Thorne she was interested in. She determined to take a final step.

"I mean the one who is engaged to a Mr. Kendal."

"Neither on 'em is engaged to Mr. Kendal, miss. One on 'em's going to be married to a capting next week, and the other is going to marry a London chap—so I heard say at Farehurst the day I come up here."

"Is that the one that is in London now?" asked Belle quickly.

"Yes, miss; she come up little more nor a week ago. I knows, you see, because I keep company with one of the house-maids at The Grange—Polly Smith. I don't know if you've heard on her."

"No, my good fellow, I haven't, but I'm sure I hope you will be happy with her. I must go now and have a chat with some of your neighbours."

"Ay, well, miss, but I wish you could stop. Seems to me the place got brighter when you came in, and 'twas so homely like to find you knew Miss Thorne and Mr. Kendal, and all the folk down at Farehurst."

"Do you know Mr. Kendal?" asked Belle, her curiosity again excited by the mention of her lover's name.

Kendal determined to do himself a good turn.

"Do I know Mr. Kendal?" he repeated. "I should think I do, and a finer young gentleman don't live in our parts. He's been that kind to me that words won't express."

"He is going to be married soon, isn't he?"

"So they say, miss. I've heard that some fine London lady is in love with him, but I don't much care about they London ladies; they're crochety, from what I hear, and want more attention and looking arter than a new-born calf. Ay, well, she's got a fine bean, and I hopes he's satisfied. It's none of my business."

"What is your name?" asked Belle. "I must enquire after you when I next go to Farehurst."

"Stokes, miss. You ask at the bar of The Blue Dragon for Jack Stokes, and they'll tell you where I am."

Belle was amused at the thought of herself standing at the bar of The Blue Dragon; she smiled, knowing that her smile could not be seen.

"Ain't they flowers, miss, you have?" asked Kendal.

"Yes, I have a few; would you like one?"

"Ay, that I should, miss, if you'd be so good."

"Which will you have, a Christmas rose or a piece of heliotrope?"

"A rose, please, miss; I allays liked they Christmas roses, coming right in the dead of winter as if to say that summer will come again."

This was a sufficiently commonplace thought, nevertheless Belle was pleased to hear an ordinary country fellow express himself in that way. She handed him the flower, which he took carefully.

"There now," he exclaimed petulantly, "if I ain't gone and broken a petal off. Ay, but I shall be glad when I get my eyesight again."

"Let me give you another instead," said Belle.

"No, miss; no, thank ye. I'll keep this one if you don't mind. I can't see it's broken."

"I really must go now," said Belle. "Good-bye. I hope you'll be gone when I come next time."

"I should like to come back then just for half an hour," replied Kendal. "Good-bye, miss, and many thanks for the flower. I shall keep it for many a day."

Belle passed on to another ward, wondering at the strange coincidence which led her to the bedside of a man from Farehurst. She walked on with a light heart; at all events her lover was safe from the wiles of Miss Thorne, and it was very gratifying to find him so well spoken of.

When she reached home she found Mrs. Fletcher there, waiting her return.

"Well, Belle, back again from your hospital walking? Really you are a dear creature to go and talk to the poor people."

"I've been rewarded to-day," replied Belle; "I met with a man from Farehurst who knew Tom and Miss Thorne."

"Tell me all about it," said Carrie; "I came up to-day on purpose to know how you and your lover are getting on after your little quarrel the last time I was here. Of course you did have a little quarrel?"

Belle gave a full account of the whole affair, concluding by saying that she thought she had been much too hard on Tom, and that she was going to write to him to make it up.

"Very well, Belle, though if I were you I should wait for him to make the first move. Where is he now?"

Belle hesitated.

"I think he is in London."

"Don't you know?"

"Only indirectly. I thought from what he said that he was going back to Farehurst."

"Hem!" coughed Mrs. Fletcher, whose married life had not been of a sort to induce confidence in the male sex. "Let me see, that man in the hospital said that Miss Thorne was engaged to some one in London?"

"Yes," faltered Belle.

"And Mr. Kendal did not tell you a week ago that she was engaged, a thing which he would have been sure to do if she had been, as it would have cleared himself. So she has become engaged to someone in town during the last week. Can you put two and two together, Belle?"

Belle rose indignantly and left the room.

"Poor child, I've made her angry," soliloquised Mrs. Fletcher. "But when she knows as much about men as I do, she'll be quite ready to believe the worst that is said of them; in fact, the worse a rumour is the more likely it is to be true."

CHAPTER III.

It was a glad morning for Kendal when Dr. Farebrother pronounced him well. To get the bandages off his head; to have a clean shave; to eat a good breakfast, seeing for himself what he put into his mouth; all these were absolute luxuries.

It is needless to remark that he determined to pay a visit to Belle that very day. He could not make out at all how it was that she had never written to him; the best reason he could imagine was that she was piqued at his not writing and had resolved not to be the first to do so. But strong in the knowledge that he had a good case, he made his call without any anxiety as to its result.

Belle was in, and alone. Their greeting was as lovers' greetings should be. As if by tacit agreement they had apparently forgotten their misunderstanding. But when the first few minutes had passed, it was clear that Belle still remembered it.

"You see I'm up in town again," said Kendal, "and I haven't given you notice this time either."

"Why do you say 'up in town again'?" asked Belle.

Kendal gave a slight start; he was afraid for a moment that she had discovered all.

"Why shouldn't I say so?" he enquired.

"Have you been out of London since I last saw you?"

"Well, to tell the truth, Belle, I haven't."

"Yes, tell the truth, please."

"But if it comes to mutual recriminations," said Kendal, "how is it that you haven't written a word to me all this time?"

"How was I to know your address?"

"My letters were forwarded from Farehurst."

"Why did you conceal your town address from me?" asked Belle. "Why did you not come here to see me, or write, at least?"

"I couldn't."

"Couldn't! What do you mean?"

"Simply that I was unable."

"Are you not going to tell me the reason?"

"I may do so when you are in a more suitable frame of mind for hearing it."

"Am I not in the right mood now?"

"No. You seem to have readopted the tone which you used when we last met, and until we can talk more as we used to do, I don't think it's my duty to make any avowals. I object to using the apologetic style."

Belle looked rather annoyed for a moment, then with a smile she said: "Well, Tom, I think we each owe the other an apology, and as you won't begin, I will. I've met someone since I saw you who knows you and Miss Thorne."

"And he or she has disabused your mind of your unfounded ideas about us?"

"Partly, at all events. I heard that Miss Thorne is engaged."

"Yes, I know."

"For a moment, or perhaps a good deal longer than that, I thought that it might be to you, or rather I thought it just possible. Someone put it into my head, and your silence, and your staying in town without coming to see me, looked so odd. But directly I saw you come into the room just now, I knew that that couldn't be true."

"You are quite right; it isn't."

"Now I've made my explanation. You were in the wrong when we last met, and I resolved you should be the first to acknowledge it. You have done so partly by coming here, but now you must tell me everything; make a clean breast of it."

"H'm! I don't know," replied Kendal.

"When a girl goes so far as to think her lover capable of becoming engaged to another girl without mentioning the trifling

fact, I am doubtful whether she can claim any explanation. How did you know I was in town?"

"I'll tell you everything. Your brother said so in a letter to my brother."

"And how did you learn about Miss Thorne's engagement?"

"I happened to visit a poor fellow in hospital who came from Farehurst."

"And you pumped him about me, of course?"

"I asked him a few questions."

"Do you call that justifiable conduct?" asked Tom. "Never mind; I suppose every woman would do it, whatever she thought about it. Now I'll make my confession. You know my eyes have been out of order lately?"

"Yes; but they were not very bad, were they?"

"Yes, they were; but I didn't care to bother anyone about it, so I came up to undergo an operation. Dr. Farebrother performed it, and for the last week or so I've been lying in darkness, waiting to hear his verdict as to whether I was cured or blind for life. So you see that I could not write or come to see you very well, could I?"

"Oh, Tom, why didn't you tell me, and let me come and nurse you? I'll never forgive you!"

"But if I had become blind I should never have——"

"Stop, Tom; don't say anything so awful. I am so sorry I've been so angry with you; but how could I know?"

"How could I know either?" asked Kendal. "How could I tell that my wretched little brother was writing to yours? I thought all the time that you were piqued at my not writing. I never thought that you were seriously offended. I expected from day to day to hear from you and find a flower in the envelope as a token of forgiveness."

"Don't say any more, Tom."

Kendal obeyed for a few moments, employing the interval in a pleasanter manner.

"By-the-bye, Belle," he then said, "do you know the name of the person who told you about me?"

"Stokes. He said you would know him."

"Oh yes; a fine young fellow. I heard something about his coming to London."

"He was a very civil young man. He seemed a little superior to the ordinary

clodhopper, though he talked with a tremendous accent."

"Yes; he was born at Farehurst, and has lived there all his life."

Kendal was immensely amused to find that Belle had still no idea of the identity of Stokes. But it was time to play his final card; they might be interrupted at any moment.

"Belle," he said tenderly, "do you remember refusing to give me a flower when I asked?"

"Don't talk of that, please."

"I won't, if you will give me one now as a token of forgiveness."

"Oh, Tom, I am so very sorry; there isn't a flower in the house."

Kendal rose and walked to the window, where he stood whistling with his hands in his pockets.

In a few moments he felt Belle's arm slipped through his.

"You don't think that's only an excuse, Tom?" she said.

"I don't know, I'm sure; I only know you can give flowers away to other fellows."

"What do you mean?"

"Not that I want your flowers," went on Tom; "when you saw me last time, and gave me one, I——"

"Gave you one last time I saw you?" cried Belle. "I don't understand."

"Yes, you did," returned Tom; "what do you call this?"

He produced from his pocket the identical Christmas rose which she had given to Stokes in the hospital; there it was, broken petal and all.

"I told you I should keep it for many a day," said Tom in reply to her wondering look, "and so I shall. You gave me a token of forgiveness you see, ever so long ago."

"And you were Stokes?" asked Belle, "and it was you who told me what a fine fellow you were, and how lucky I was to get you?"

"And it was you who gave away flowers to fine young fellows whom you didn't know?" laughed Tom. "Yes, it was, and you were an angel who came unawares to my bedside, and gave me the first pleasant half-hour I had spent in that dreary hospital."

"I ought not to forgive you for all this," said Belle, "you took a mean advantage of me. But——"

"But what, my darling?"

"You can keep the Christmas rose if you like."

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II.

CHAPTER V. HAUNTED.

WHEN first the news became known that "Maister Geoffrey" had become the owner of Dale End, great was the stir and excitement in Becklington.

"If oi were yo'," said a crafty neighbour to Jeremy Bindwhistle (long since deposed from his post of head man at the White House), "oi'd go oop t' Maister Geoffrey and tell 'un as owd hands should have t' fust chance. Happen he'll set yo' ahead o' the lot o' gardeners as he'll gather about him—nay, happen yo' might get such promotion, i' toime, as for to droive yer missis to church and market i' a spring-cart. I've heerd tell on head-gardeners' comin' to such-like upliftins—aye, that have I!"

"Ketch a weasel asleep wi' his tail a-fire," replied Jeremy, winking a slow and laborious wink, and moistening his hands in a homely and primitive fashion, as though he were already preparing to handle the reins of the spring-cart in question. "I'm wick, neighbour, and t' missis is fettling my Sunday-go-to-meetin' waistcoat, for to give me a countenance afore t' quality, and boldness o' tongue to spake oop strong and hearty i' my own proper person."

So Jeremy, in his own proper person, spoke up to some purpose, and shortly afterwards found himself not only head-gardener at Dale End, but the tenant of the lodge at the big gates, and as prosperous a fellow, take it altogether, as might be seen in a day's march.

No one in Becklington grudged Jeremy—or "Maister Bindwhistle," as he began to be styled—this success in life; and in truth he was a very different man nowadays to the somewhat lazy individual who let the flowers in the White House garden "mak' posies o' themselves" at their own sweet will. A sense of greatness and responsibility oftentimes begets energy. It had done so in the case of Mr. Bindwhistle. The subordinates he commanded were ruled with an iron hand. Idleness or neglect meant instant dismissal. When Mrs. Devenant returned to Becklington—under altered circumstances such as entitled her to the consideration of persons of discernment—Jeremy now and again stepped down to see her, looked with a critical eye at the flower-beds over

which he once had reigned, and altogether demeaned himself as though no tiniest plant therein, no microscopic weed, had, in those bygone days, been able to elude his vigilance. Also as if he rather thought the "boy" who "minded" Mrs. Devenant's garden was a shirk and a deceiver, and required the sharpest looking after.

That Jeremy talked of landscape gardening as though he had been born and bred to that extended form of business; that he sketchily laid out all the surrounding county, and more besides, as he sat enthroned on the high-backed bench beside Farmer Dale at The Safe Retreat, are things that may be taken for granted. We most of us find our ideas expand with our opportunities, and are inclined at last to yield to the pleasing delusion that they have never revolved in any narrower sphere.

And in truth Jeremy might be pardoned for taking some pride in those lovely terraced walks, those stretches of emerald turf, with here and there noble groups of trees casting soft shadows of waving branch and bough, sylvan haunts where once little Hilda tripped by Miss Alicia's side, and, in a later day, Cuthbert Deane dreamed of the woman who was now his happy wife.

Nigh upon eight years had now gone by since Jeremy had moved himself, his family, and his goods and chattels, into the lodge at Dale End gates. His companions at The Safe Retreat had, therefore, grown used to a certain pomposity upon his part, that no man took ill, since it was a manner to be looked for in those who sit in high places. Jeremy, like Farmer Dale, had grown stout with years; more florid, too, than of yore; and steadily addicted to waistcoats of violent tints and vivid contrasts.

It was, therefore, a startling thing for the worthies assembled in the bar of The Safe Retreat one Saturday night in the early autumn of the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight, to see the said Jeremy enter the portals of that cosy haven with listless shuffling gait, pallid face, and downcast look. He nodded to the assembly in general as he took his accustomed place by Farmer Dale, and the assembly nodded to him. One or two breathed hard, but no one spoke until Jeremy began filling his pipe with mechanical fingers, that held no tobacco; ramming down nothing with busy little finger, and staring oddly at the fire.

"Whatever's ado, mon?" cried Farmer Dale, slapping his neighbour on the knee;

"has thy missis been thrappin' at thee about summat? Whatever's come over thee, Jeremy?"

For all answer Jeremy drew a long breath, giving a furtive glance first at the unlatched door and then at the close-curtained window.

Jake got up and closed the door. Serious business was evidently impending, and eavesdroppers must be guarded against.

Fortunately no strangers were present, therefore Bindwhistle might be encouraged to speak out.

"There's a heaviness over thee, lad," said the farmer, again striving to rally the meditative gardener; "What's t' meanin' on 't?"

"There's no heaviness about me," said Jeremy, speaking sullenly, and still absently filling his pipe with nothing, "but what's becomin' in oqe as has seen the living sperrit o' a dead mon."

Each man present projected his head towards the speaker.

"A sperrit!" said they, all speaking at once, while Softie quickly buttoned his shabby coat across his breast, as though to panoply himself in the armour nearest at hand without loss of time.

"Well, a ghost, if so be yo' loike that better," quoth Jeremy.

"Did it say aught to ye?" asked one.

"What shape did it tak'?" cried another.

"What were it loike?" exclaimed a third.

"Wheer wur it goin' to?" put in Softie.

"How can I tell my story if a yo' fellys speak at onct?" said Jeremy irritably.

Then he let his pipe fall from the shaking hands which could no longer hold it, making no comment and no lament when it lay shivered to pieces upon the red bricks of the floor.

"Ay, but it were a fearsome sight!"

At this they gathered closer round him still. They might have been bees and he their queen, so eagerly did they cluster about him, Softie, meanwhile, edging a little away from the window, as uncertain whether a ghostly hand might not presently draw aside the curtain and have him by the ear.

"It wur creepin' along nigh the big rho'dendrun tree when first I see'd it," said Jeremy, speaking in a sepulchral voice, as became the theme. "It came upon me wi' a glimmer o' light, so to speak—a somethin' a' i' white. I'd called to moind some young plants I had i' a frame, and lef' open, not thinkin' there be a bit of a frost, and it wur late; it chimed twelve

from the tower just as I ketched the glimmer as I spoke on before. If I had na' stepped out of the way, the thing would ha' run up agen me. It come right at me——"

Softie turned up the collar of his coat, and put his hands in his pockets. Every possible protection was called for at such a crisis.

"What did it look loike, when it come close?" put in the constable, whom the generosity of a new-fangled town corporation retained in his old office; "was it folded i' a sheet lengthwise? That's the fashion o' them, one and all."

"No, it weren't," said Jeremy, aggrieved that his ghost did not answer to the approved pattern.

"Why, lad," chimed in the farmer, in high glee, "this sperrit o' thine ain't nothing no better than Softie's here—time he coome in wi' a face like milk and 's eyes startin' fra' 's yed, and told us how he'd seen a boggart wi' three legs, and how it made up to him, belchin' out hot burnin' brimstone i' 's face. Don't be shamefaced over the thing, Softie," went on the jolly old fellow; "what if thy boggart wur but Sally Hurdle's cow wi' three white legs an' a black 'un, and she stuck i' a bog and blowin' hard through fear? The wickiest of us is took in at times, and a black leg won't show on a shadowy night, tho' white ones may."

Jeremy treated this narrative with contempt, rolling a bit of broken pipe-stem about with his foot, and staring hard at the fire.

"If thy ghost weren't wrapped i' a windin'-sheet, what were it clothed upon wi', Maister Bindwhistle?" said Matthew Hawthorne, when the laugh against Softie had subsided.

"Wi' a waggoner's frock down to 's heels. It had a red beard, an' t' yure on its yed come down to its eyes. Its hands wur hanging down at its soides, and the fingers wur workin' same as Billy Hurdle's when he's i' the fits. It made as tho' it wur bearin' a heavy burden—stoopin' and creepin'-like, and groanin' as it went."

"But how did yo' know it for a sperrit?" put in the constable. Accustomed to question prisoners, he went to the root of the matter at once.

"Because it had the face of a dead mon," said Jeremy; "because its eyes were the eyes of a dead mon—same as Gabriel Devenant's, time as his missis pult him out o' t' big dyke."

At this, even the farmer began to think the night was more chilly than he had imagined; while, as for Softie, he was busy meditating what possible bribe he could offer the constable to induce him to see him as far as his own door.

"It must have come very nigh for yo' to see it so plain," said the farmer.

"Yo' may say that," answered Jeremy with a long sighing breath; "it looked clean through me and out at the other side o' me. I tell yo' I felt like a pane o' glass."

"Were yo' feert, lad?" said the farmer.

"Not I!" said Jeremy stoutly; "it 'ud ill become one as is set up on high——"

But the farmer did not let him finish his sentence.

"What did'st thee do, lad?"

"Oh, I was nearer t' big house than my own, so I hastened my footsteps——"

"Yo' took to your heels, like a man!" shouted the farmer; "same as t' rest on us would ha' done—that's about it, lad!"

"Well, I thought I'd make sure as no one at the Dale had seen the sight as Heaven had predestinated to me. 'For,' says I to myself, 'if Mrs. Geoffrey, and she so weak, and frail, and ailing more than mostly this while past, were to hear of such-like company creeping among the trees, she'd be skeered to death.'"

"But they'd all be abed at the Dale at that hour o' the night," said the farmer, with a shrewd glance.

"Ay, so they wur; but I couldna' tell if that might be so——"

"Didst come back t' same way?" put in Jake.

"No," said Jeremy, "I'd told one o' the lads to wrap a bit o' matting about some o' the young plants, so I went t' other way home—to see if he'd done it."

"Well, it's a rum hearin' this, and no mistake," said Matthew; "an' I hope no word of it may get to Mrs. Geoffrey, since ghostly fear is bad for the sick, and apt to be aguish."

"Well," said Jeremy, turning upon him almost fiercely; "I've kep' it all to mysel' this week past, tho' it's gone as bad wi' me as heavy victuals, and giv' me the shivers i' my insoide past all belief; so dunna be thrappin' at me like as if I was a sieve, and couldn't hold nothin'."

"We'd best all keep it to oursels," said the farmer, tolerant of Jeremy's pettishness, as one who felt that a man privileged to see ghosts must be tenderly handled;

"for, as Maister Bindwhistle says, it might fright Mrs. Geoffrey, and she's bad enoo' wi'out that."

"It seems to me," said Jake reflectively, rubbing his chin, "that the young heir is too much away. It's here to-day, and gone to-morrow, wi' Maister Ralph; and half the sunshine seems to go out o' the old market-place when he never comes ridin' through on his black pony, an' cryin' out, 'Jake, Jake, I say! how's trade this mornin'!'"

"It's ill work for the likes of us to set oursels up to judge our betters," said Matthew, "and far be such from me; but I've oftentimes said to mysel', if I'd a lad o' my own like Maister Ralph, I'd never breath free-like when he was out o' my sight."

"Taint want o' love, Lord knows, as drives the squire to send Maister Ralph continual to foreign lands. Why, I've seen a light shine out o' his eyes when he's lookin' at that boy, as 'ud go far to bring the tears to one's own," said Jeremy, speaking as one with authority. "And yet he conna' rest to let t' lad bide home; it's eddication as he's drivin' at—that's what t' squire's oop to. Why, I've heard tell as Maister Ralph can speak in as many tongues as there's fingers on a man's hand, that have I!"

At this there was a general exclamation of amazement. Diversity of tongues was not as common a gift in those days as now, and to the rustic mind such knowledge was something alarming.

"Yo' say well, Jake," continued Jeremy, pleased with the impression he had made, "that Maister Ralph is like sunshine i' the place. When he comes oop to me, wi' his laughin' eyes an' his merry smile, and 'Jeremy,' says he, 'give me a bonnie one to set i' my boozum,' I'm ready to cut the choicest flower o' the lot. Ay, if I'd none but it, and was never to have another!"

"Wherever's the lad got to now?" said the farmer, taking an immense pull at his pipe, and exhaling a corresponding cloud through his nose.

"Lord knows!" said Jeremy. "It's at th' other side the world, I verily do believe; so far away you can't make out the name on't. And I wish he was home, for there's times when I don't like the looks on t' squire."

"Nor me neither," said Farmer Dale, shaking his head. "He's nobbut a man i' the prime o' life—something about fifty-five, or thereabouts, I reckon, and he

looks more like seventy. He seemed to grow old-like all at once, and he's got a restless way wi' him—a troubled-like way. Then see how he's lost flesh! why, you could count the bones i' his hands; and when he grips yo', it's a kindly enoo grip (what else should it be, being his'n?) but cold to the feel, same as one as is gradely sick. I dunnot like t' looks on t' squire no better than yo' do, Maister Bindwhistle, and yet he's bin as lucky a man—luckier than any that stands i' Becklington this day! Who'd have thought ten years ago as Maister Geoffrey would be squire o' Dale End?"

"Or t' ould squire and his son both dead and buried, and Miss Alicia married to our vicar?" continued Matthew.

"Yet I mind," said Jake, putting his head on one side, and looking unspeakably wise, "that the night afore it were known as them two were to be wed, I'd a candle wi' two wicks, that had I, and the voice within me seemed to say, 'Jake, my brave chap, yo'll hear a tale o' wedded love come mornin'—which I did," added Jake with the air of a prophet whose predictions had been fulfilled.

"Ay, yo may call it wedded love too," said the farmer, "there's some as weds and don't love, and some—more's the pity—as loves and don't wed, but them two is set afore the rest on us for a foreshadowin' of what a pleasant place this world may be for them as does both things wi' a' their might, and loves to help others to happiness just because they've got such a heap on it themselves. I mind when Miss Alicia was the sorrowfulest lookin' woman yo' could see, and I doant say but what the shadow of it all is on her yet, and ever will be—but it's a shadow wi' the sun shinin' through it, for all that."

This was very interesting, and highly gratifying to the hearers, but the conclave presently drifted once more towards the subject of the ghost in the Dale End shrubbery, and Softie resolved that, at any cost, he must get the constable to see him home that night.

Though Jeremy, after this, kept a pretty strict watch for the ghost each Sunday night that he chanced to be abroad at a late hour, no apparition appeared; and so time passed. Autumn deepened every russet and golden tint in the woods, turned the bracken red and yellow, and gave the earwigs plenty of beautiful houses to live in, in the shape

of daintily folded dahlia flowers—gold and crimson, white and mottled.

At last came a Sunday upon which a friendly quartette—Jeremy, Jake, and Matthew Hawthorne, with poor Softie thrown in as a sort of make-weight, paid a visit to Farmer Dale and his ruddy-cheeked Nancy.

What with tobacco, beer, and chat, time passed quickly, and midnight was not far off when the party broke up, while, even then, the jolly farmer insisted upon seeing his guests part way home.

Be it fully understood that each and all of the five men were in a condition "to walk the plank," as Matthew grimly put it; in other words, to cross the brook at the bottom of Mrs. Dale's garden in perfect safety. If one betrayed the slightest possible inclination to waver and was glad of a hand slipped beneath his elbow from behind, that one was Softie.

The night had changed, during that pleasant time they had spent in the cosy farmhouse parlour, from fair to foul.

It was a night of clouds hurrying across the sky; of wet leaves, dank from late rain, shining in the pallid sickly light of a moon obscured by a moving veil of mist; a night full of flitting shadows, of whispers among the branches overhead; a night eerie, wild, changeful, yet warm as a night in summer.

Good liquor, and not too much of it, warms the heart without muddling the head.

Jake's heart was warmed so that he sang as he walked, somewhat ahead of the rest, sang stoutly of glory to come and of foes abased.

"My foes Thy footstool Thou shalt make
And from their necks the stiffness take,
While I on glory full of pride—"

Bless us all this night and keep us! Look ye there!"

"There" was a gleam of something white among the trees that skirted the Dale End property, and even as Jake gasped forth that unpremeditated amendment to his hymn, it came nearer—grew more and more defined—a slowly-moving figure clothed in white.

"I forgot we'd got to pass by t' squire's, or I'd never have come," moaned Softie, whose legs shook under him.

Slowly on and on came the figure, the fitful light now touching it, now leaving it in shadow, now touching it again.

It must be conceded that Jake made a struggle to be as brave as his song. He

planted his spindle legs far apart, as who should say: "They mayn't be much to boast of, but they're the best foundation Nature has bestowed upon me, and upon them I take my stand."

But even the spindles wavered as that creeping figure came near the high fence that separated the lane from the woodland, and, as the figure passed close, the men huddled up together in a heap, for the face they looked upon was the face of a dead man, and the widely-opened eyes, on which the moon just then gleamed brightly, were a dead man's eyes—unseeing, glassy, terrible in their immobility.

The ghastly thing, in clinging waggoner's frock, with unkempt red locks coming low on the brow, and crowned by a low wide-brimmed hat, had vanished—died out of sight among a group of clustering trees, and a faint moaning sound as of a thing in mortal pain was borne upon the wind to awestruck ears.

"What did I tell yo'?" gasped Jeremy, who stood grasping his hair with his hands, while his hat lay in the rut; "didna' I tell yo' it wur bent under a burden? Did yo' see t' hands gropin' at summat as bowed its back, and workin' like Bill's when he's took wi' the fits? I wish I wur whoam."

May be they all did.

"Why wherever's Softie got to?" cried the farmer, glad, no doubt, of the thoroughly human sound of his own voice.

Softie was seated in the ditch at the opposite side of the road, crying bitterly, and wiping his eyes and nose on the sleeve of his jacket. It was no easy job either to drag him from his lair, since as soon as he was set upon his feet he flung himself down again; but, upon the farmer suggesting that they should all go home and leave him to interview the ghost alone, he took a more practical view of matters, and was led the rest of the way home by the chief constable, as if he were a prisoner newly captured by the arm of the law.

The men were very silent as they went

their way. The memory of that ghastly face, those fixed and sightless eyes, was a thing that clung to the mind like a burr. It was a thing that could not be shaken off even by the bravest.

They got Softie home; and it is to be feared his better-half cruelly misconstrued his trembling and prostrate condition; but as she flung to the door in Farmer Dale's face, and refused to hear a word of explanation, everyone was powerless, and the last thing his companions heard of Softie was the fresh outburst of weeping with which he began to narrate what his wife was pleased to term a "pack o' danged lies."

Jeremy had been left at the lodges.

There remained therefore only the farmer (whose solitary walk home did not appear to cause him much apprehension), Matthew, and Jake the cobbler.

"I reckon I've hit the right nail on the head," said the farmer gravely, before he bade the other two good-night; "Yon's the man as robbed t' bank—donnot yo' mind how they said as he'd carrotty locks an' a carter's smock—eh? He's dead and buried be who he may, but t' weary load o' sin upon his soul wunna let him rest."

Here the speaker paused a moment, overcome by the strange and awful experiences of that Sabbath night.

"I reckon yo're about reet, farmer," said Jake after a moment's deep reflection. "I reckon yon's him, as ye say. But what dangs me is this: why should he tak' to wanderin' round by Squire Dale's place, of a' places on the wide earth?"

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XL. VISITORS AT TRETTON.

It so happened that the three visitors who had been asked to Tretton all agreed to go on the same day. There was, indeed, no reason why Harry should delay his visit, and much why the other two should expedite theirs. Mr. Grey knew that the thing, if done at all, should be done at once; and Mountjoy, as he had agreed to accept his father's offer, could not put himself too quickly under the shelter of his father's roof. "You can have twenty pounds," Mr. Grey had said when the subject of the money was mooted. "Will that suffice?" Mountjoy had said that it would suffice amply, and then, returning to his brother's rooms, had waited there with what patience he possessed till he sallied forth to The Continental to get the best dinner which that restaurant could afford him. He was beginning to feel that his life was very sad in London, and to look forward to the glades of Tretton with some anticipation of rural delight.

He went down by the same train with Mr. Grey;—"a great grind," as Mountjoy called it, when Mr. Grey proposed a departure at ten o'clock. Harry followed, so as to reach Tretton only in time for dinner. "If I may venture to advise you," said Mr. Grey in the train, "I should do in this matter whatever my father asked me." Hereupon Mountjoy frowned. "He is anxious to make some provision for you."

"I'm not grateful to my father, if you mean that."

"It is hard to say whether you should be grateful. But, from the first, he has done the best he could for you, according to his lights."

"You believe all this about my mother?"

"I do."

"I don't. That's the difference. And I don't think that Augustus believes it."

"The story is undoubtedly true."

"You must excuse me if I will not accept it."

"At any rate, you had parted with your share in the property."

"My share was the whole."

"After your father's death," said Mr. Grey; "and that was gone."

"We needn't discuss the property. What is it that he expects me to do now?"

"Simply to be kind in your manner to him, and to agree to what he says about the personal property. It is his intention, as far as I understand it, to leave you everything."

"He is very kind."

"I think he is."

"Only that it would all have been mine if he had not cheated me of my birthright."

"Or Mr. Tyrrwhit's, and Mr. Hart's, and Mr. Spicer's."

"Mr. Tyrrwhit, and Mr. Hart, and Mr. Spicer could not have robbed me of my name. Let them have done what they would with their bonds, I should have been at any rate Scarborough of Tretton. My belief is that I need not blush for my mother. He has made it appear that I should do so. I can't forgive him because he gives me the chairs and tables."

"They will be worth thirty thousand pounds," said Mr. Grey.

"I can't forgive him."

The cloud sat very black upon Mountjoy Scarborough's face as he said this, and the blacker it sat the more Mr. Grey liked him. If something could be done to redeem from ruin a young man who so felt

about his mother,—who so felt about his mother, simply because she had been his mother,—it would be a good thing to do. Augustus had entertained no such feeling. He had said to Mr. Grey, as he had said also to his brother, that “he had not known the lady.” When the facts as to the distribution of the property had been made known to him, he had cared nothing for the injury done by the story to his mother’s name. The story was too true. Mr. Grey knew that it was true; but he could not on that account do other than feel an intense desire to confer some benefit on Mountjoy Scarborough. He put his hand out affectionately, and laid it on the other man’s knee. “Your father has not long to live, Captain Scarborough.”

“I suppose not.”

“And he is at present anxious to make what reparation is in his power. What he can leave you will produce, let us say, fifteen hundred a year. Without a will from him, you would have to live on your brother’s bounty.”

“By Heaven, no!” said Mountjoy, thinking of the pistol and the bullets.

“I see nothing else.”

“I see, but I cannot explain.”

“Do you not think that fifteen hundred a year would be better than nothing,—with a wife, let us say,” said Mr. Grey, beginning to introduce the one argument on which he believed so much must depend.

“With a wife?”

“Yes; with a wife.”

“With what wife? A wife may be very well, but a wife must depend on who it is. Is there any one that you mean?”

“Not exactly any particular person,” said the lawyer lamely.

“Pshaw! What do I want with a wife? Do you mean to say that my father has told you that he intends to clog his legacy with the burden of a wife? I would not accept it with such a burden,—unless I could choose the wife myself. To tell the truth, there is a girl—”

“Your cousin?”

“Yes; my cousin. When I was well-to-do in the world I was taught to believe that I could have her. If she will be mine, Mr. Grey, I will renounce gambling altogether. If my father can manage that, I will forgive him,—or will endeavour to do so. The property which he can leave me shall be settled altogether upon her. I will endeavour to reform myself, and so to live that no misfortune shall come upon her. If that is what you mean, say so.”

“Well; not quite that.”

“To no other marriage will I agree. That has been the dream of my life through all those moments of hot excitement and assured despair which I have endured. Her mother has always told me that it should be so, and she herself in former days did not deny it. Now you know it all. If my father wishes to see me married, Florence Mountjoy must be my wife.” Then he sank back on his seat, and nothing more was said between them till they had reached Tretton.

The father and son had not met each other since the day on which the former had told the latter the story of his birth. Since then Mountjoy had disappeared from the world, and for a few days his father had thought that he had been murdered. But now they met as they might have done had they seen each other a week ago. “Well, Mountjoy, how are you?” And, “How are you, sir?” Such were the greetings between them. And no others were spoken. In a few minutes the son was allowed to go and look after the rural joys he had anticipated, and the lawyer was left closeted with the squire.

Mr. Grey soon explained his proposition. Let the property be left to trustees, who should realise from it what money it should fetch, and keep the money in their own hands, paying Mountjoy the income. “There could,” he said, “be nothing better done, unless Mountjoy would agree to marry. He is attached, it seems, to his cousin,” said Mr. Grey, “and he is unwilling at present to marry any one else.”

“He can’t marry her,” said the squire.

“I do not know the circumstances.”

“He can’t marry her. She is engaged to the young man who will be here just now. I told you,—did I not?—that Harry Annesley is coming here. My son knows that he will be here to-day.”

“Everybody knows the story of Mr. Annesley and the captain.”

“They are to sit down to dinner together, and I trust they may not quarrel. The lady of whom you are speaking is engaged to young Annesley, and Mountjoy’s suit in that direction is hopeless.”

“Hopeless, you think?”

“Utterly hopeless. Your plan of providing him with a wife would be very good if it were feasible. I should be very glad to see him settled. But if he will marry no one but Florence Mountjoy he must remain unmarried. Augustus has had his

hand in that business, and don't let us dabble in it." Then the squire gave the lawyer full instructions as to the will which was to be made. Mr. Grey and Mr. Bullist were to be named as trustees, with instructions to sell everything which it would be in the squire's legal power to bequeath. The books, the gems, the furniture, both at Tretton and in London, the plate, the stock, the farm-produce, the pictures on the walls, and the wine in the cellars, were all named. He endeavoured to persuade Mr. Grey to consent to a cutting of the timber, so that the value of it might be taken out of the pocket of the younger brother, and put into that of the elder. But to this Mr. Grey would not assent. "There would be an air of persecution about it," he said, "and it mustn't be done." But to the general stripping of Tretton for the benefit of Mountjoy he gave a cordial agreement.

"I am not quite sure that I have done with Augustus as yet," said the squire. "I had made up my mind not to be put out by trifles; not to be vexed at a little. My treatment of my children has been such, that though I have ever intended to do them good, I must have seemed to each at different periods to have injured him. I have not therefore expected much from them. But I have received less than nothing from Augustus. It is possible that he may hear from me again." To this Mr. Grey said nothing, but he had taken his instructions about the drawing of the will.

Harry came down by the train in time for dinner. On the journey down he had been perplexed in his mind, thinking of various things. He did not quite understand why Mr. Scarborough had sent for him. His former intimacy had been with Augustus, and though there had been some cordiality of friendship shown by the old man to the son's companion, it had amounted to no more than might be expected from one who was notably good-natured. A great injury had been done to Harry, and he supposed that his visit must have some reference to that injury. He had been told in so many words that, come when he might, he would not find Augustus at Tretton. From this and from other signs he almost saw that there existed a quarrel between the squire and his son. Therefore he felt that something was to be said as to the state of his affairs at Buston.

But if, as the train drew near to Tretton, he was anxious as to his meeting with the squire, he was much more so as to the

captain. The reader will remember all the circumstances under which they two had last seen each other. Harry had been furiously attacked by Mountjoy and had then left him sprawling,—dead as some folks had said on the following day,—under the rail. His only crime had been that he was drunk. If the disinherited one would give him his hand and let bygones be bygones, he would do the same. He felt no personal animosity. But there was a difficulty.

As he was driven up to the door in a cab belonging to the squire, there was Mountjoy standing before the house. He too had thought of the difficulties and had made up his mind that it would not do for him to meet his late foe without some few words intended for the making of peace. "I hope you are well, Mr. Annesley," he said, offering his hand as the other got out of the cab. "It may be as well that I should apologise at once for my conduct. I was at that moment considerably distressed, as you may have heard. I had been declared to be penniless, and to be nobody. The news had a little unmanned me, and I was beside myself."

"I quite understand it;—quite understand it," said Annesley, giving his hand. "I am very glad to see you back again, and in your father's house." Then Mountjoy turned on his heel, and went through the hall, leaving Harry to the care of the butler. The captain thought that he had done enough, and that the affair in the street might now be regarded as a dream. Harry was taken up to shake hands with the old man, and in due time came down to dinner, where he met Mr. Grey and the young doctor. They were all very civil to him, and, upon the whole, he spent a pleasant evening. On the next day about noon the squire sent for him. He had been told at breakfast that it was the squire's intention to see him in the middle of the day, and he had been unable therefore to join Mountjoy's shooting-party.

"Sit down, Mr. Annesley," said the old man. "You were surprised, no doubt, when you got my invitation?"

"Well; yes; perhaps so; but I thought it very kind."

"I meant to be kind. But still, it requires some explanation. You see, I am such an old cripple that I cannot give invitations like anybody else. Now you are here I must not eat and drink with you, and in order to say a few words to you, I am obliged to keep you in the house

till the doctor tells me that I am strong enough to talk."

"I am glad to find you so much better than when I was here before."

"I don't know much about that. There will never be a 'much better' in my case. The people about me talk with the utmost unconcern of whether I can live one month or possibly two. Anything beyond that is quite out of the question." The squire took a pride in making the worst of his case, so that the people to whom he talked should marvel the more at his vitality. "But we won't mind my health now. It is true, I fear, that you have quarrelled with your uncle."

"It is quite true that he has quarrelled with me."

"I am afraid that that is more important. He means, if he can, to cut you out of the entail."

"He does not mean that I shall have the property if he can prevent it."

"I don't think very much of entails myself," said the squire. "If a man has a property he should be able to leave it as he pleases; or—or else he doesn't have it."

"That is what the law intends, I suppose," said Harry.

"Just so; but the law is such an old woman that she never knows how to express herself to any purpose. I haven't allowed the law to bind me. I dare say you know the story."

"About your two sons,—and the property? I think all the world knows the story."

"I suppose it has been talked about a little," said the squire with a chuckle. "My object has been to prevent the law from handing over my property to the fraudulent claims which my son's creditors were enabled to make;—and I have succeeded fairly well. On that head I have nothing to regret. Now your uncle is going to take other means."

"Yes; he is going to take means which are at any rate lawful."

"But which will be tedious, and may not, perhaps, succeed. He is intending to have an heir of his own."

"That I believe is his purpose," said Harry.

"There is no reason why he shouldn't;—but he mayn't, you know."

"He is not married yet."

"No;—he is not married yet. And then he has also stopped the allowance he used to make you." Harry nodded assent. "Now all this is a great shame."

"I think so."

"The poor gentleman has been awfully bamboozled."

"He is not so very old," said Harry. "I don't think he is more than fifty."

"But he is an old goose. You'll excuse me, I know. Augustus Scarborough got him up to London, and filled him full of lies."

"I am aware of it."

"And so am I aware of it. He has told him stories as to your conduct with Mountjoy, which, added to some youthful indiscretions of your own—"

"It was simply because I didn't like to hear him read sermons."

"That was an indiscretion, as he had the power in his hands to do you an injury. Most men have got some little bit of pet tyranny in their hearts. I have had none." To this Harry could only bow. "I let my two boys do as they pleased, only wishing that they should lead happy lives. I never made them listen to sermons, or even to lectures. Probably I was wrong. Had I tyrannised over them, they would not have tyrannised over me as they have done. Now I'll tell you what it is that I propose to do. I will write to your uncle, or will get Mr. Merton to write for me, and will explain to him as well as I can, the depth, and the blackness, and the cruelty,—the unfathomable heathen cruelty, together with the falsehoods, the premeditated lies, and the general rascality on all subjects—of my son Augustus. I will explain to him that of all men I know, he is the least trustworthy. I will explain to him that, if led in a matter of such importance by Augustus Scarborough, he will be surely led astray. And I think that between us,—between Merton and me that is,—we can concoct a letter that shall be efficacious. But I will get Mountjoy also to go and see him, and explain to him out of his own mouth what in truth occurred that night when he and you fell out in the streets. Mr. Prosper must be a more vindictive man than I take him to be in regard to sermons if he will hold out after that." Then Mr. Scarborough allowed him to go out, and if possible find the shooters somewhere about the park.

CYMBELINE.

SHAKESPEARE gathered from Ralph Holinshed's *Chronicles of Englande, Scotland, and Irelande*, 1577, that there once flourished one Kymbeline, or Cymbeline, who, upon the death of his father

Theomantius, became king of the Britons "in the year of the world 3944, after the building of Rome 728, and before the birth of our Saviour 33;" that this monarch had been brought up at Rome, and had there been made a knight by Augustus Cæsar, under whom he served in the wars, winning such favour that he was at liberty to pay tribute or not as he listed; and that, according to the most approved account, Kymbeline reigned thirty-five years, died and was buried in London, leaving behind him two sons, Guiderius and Aviragus. Holinshed further relates how at an earlier date there had been controversy between the Britons and Augustus Cæsar concerning a demand for the payment of tribute to the Romans, when the emperor had made preparations to pass with an army into Britain, and had advanced so far as the hither parts of France, but was diverted from his purpose now by a rebellion of the Pannonians and the Dalmatians, now by the disordered condition of the Gauls, and now by a rising of the Salassians, the Cantabrians, and the Asturians. Shakespeare's Cymbeline thus addresses Caius Lucius, the Roman general, who has come to Britain to threaten war in Cæsar's name:

Thou art welcome, Caius.
Thy Cæsar knighted me; my youth I spent
Much under him; of him I gathered honour;
Which he, to seek of me again, perforce,
Behoves me keep at utterance. I am perfect
That the Pannonians and Dalmatians, for
Their liberties, are now in arms: a precedent
Which, not to read, would show the Britons cold:
So Cæsar shall not find them.

But having obtained this historical background for his play, the poet had to seek in romance the more important portions of his subject.

Cymbeline is generally believed to be one of Shakespeare's later works—it was first printed in the folio collection of 1623. The play is carefully divided into acts and scenes—other of the collected plays are deficient in that respect—and the text, though sometimes obscure, presents few examples of absolute error. In Cymbeline Shakespeare reproduces certain of the features of his earlier dramas. The king follows Lear in his folly and passionateness, and in his cruel injustice to his daughter. Posthumus is a weaker Othello, as Iachimo is an inferior Iago. The tapestry in Imogen's chamber pictures anew Cleopatra on the Cydnus. The foolish prince Cloten presents some resemblance to the silly gentleman Roderigo. Imogen assumes male dress as Rosalind

had done before her; she is as impatient to rejoin her husband as Juliet is eager to retain her Romeo; and like Juliet, with the help of a sleeping-draught, she seems to be dead for a while only. The description of Imogen in bed recalls passages of Lucrece, and Bellarius's account of the advantages of a country life corresponds with the speeches of the banished duke in *As You Like It*.

The story of Cymbeline in regard to the wager between Posthumus and Iachimo, had been the subject of two thirteenth century romances and of one mediæval play in the French language. In the Roman de la Violette, ou de Gerard de Nevers, by Gibert de Montreuil, the heroine is named Oriant, Gerard de Nevers is the Posthumus, and a knight called Liziant the Iachimo of the story. The King of France has assembled his court at Pont-de-l'Arche upon Easter Day. The festival is enlivened by the presence of knights and ladies, by dances and songs. Upon the invitation of the Chatelaine de Dijon, the young and handsome Gerard sings boastfully of his Oriant. Liziant is scornful and jealous and decries the lady, pledging his lands that he will prove her worthlessness. Gerard in turn stakes his possessions upon Oriant's fidelity, and the king approves the wager. So Liziant departs, obtains admission to the presence of Oriant, and professes love for her, only to be indignantly repulsed. Much discomfited he is accosted by the treacherous duenna of Oriant, old Gondrée, and learns from her of certain marks upon the lady's body—very much such as Iachimo describes in regard to Imogen. This information enables him to return to the court and satisfy his judges of the success of his enterprise. Convinced of her guilt Gerard resolves to slay his wife, but he subsequently is content simply to abandon her. In a fainting state she is discovered by the Duke of Metz, who is passing with his knights, and who forms the design of marrying her. But presently Gerard, visiting in disguise the lands he has surrendered to Liziant, enters his presence and chances to overhear his conversation with the duenna Gondrée. Gerard is thus convinced of his wife's innocence, and journeys in search of her. Of course, in the end, after various adventures, Oriant is found and relieved of the charge that had been brought against her. Gerard and Liziant engage in a mortal combat. Liziant is vanquished, and, before dying,

confesses his sin and does justice to the lady he had so foully aspersed.

The Roman de la Compte de Poitiers closely resembles the Roman de la Violette. In the presence of King Pepin and his court, the count vaunts the beauty and virtue of his countess. Piqued by this boastfulness the Duke of Normandy wagers Normandy against Poitou that he will win the lady's favour. The challenge is accepted, and the duke repairs to Poitou. He makes his declaration, and is promptly rejected. A perfidious nurse supplies him with a ring stolen from her mistress's finger, some of her hairs disentangled from her comb, and a scrap of her samite robe. These he represents to be tokens of the countess's affection for him. King Pepin pronounces that the duke has won his wager. This romance ends as did the other, with the overhearing of a conversation that proves the lady's innocence, with a combat between the husband and the traducer, and the latter's confession in dying of the baseness of his behaviour. The details differ in some respect, but the stories are essentially the same.

In the early play bearing the general title of *The Miracle de Notre Dame*, the characters of the romance reappear, while the Creator, the Virgin, St. John, and the Archangels Michael and Gabriel are concerned as interlocutors. Having conquered Alfons, King of Spain, the Emperor Lotaire has given the kingdom to his son Ostes, who has taken to wife Denise, the daughter of Alfons. Leaving Denise in Burgos, Ostes visits Rome, meeting there the Count Berengier. The fidelity of Denise becomes the subject of a wager between Berengier and Ostes. Berengier is baffled, but he enlists the services of Eglantine, the waiting-woman of Denise. Eglantine informs the count of certain marks upon her mistress's body, and steals from her to give to the count a curiosity she much valued. These evidences are accepted as proof of her guilt, and Ostes determines to kill her. By the advice of the Virgin she assumes male attire, and flies from Burgos to her father and uncle at Grenada. Ostes, unable to find her to wreak his vengeance upon her, turns renegade, blasphemes his Creator, and serves the Saracen. Meanwhile the disguised Denise, her sex unsuspected, has entered the service of her uncle, and been appointed his standard-bearer. Presently she proceeds to Rome, proclaims Berengier a traitor, and chal-

lenges him to single combat. By this time Ostes has repented of his denial of Christianity, and repaired to Rome to do penance for his sin. He also challenges Berengier, and is permitted to enter the lists against him in preference to Denise. Berengier is overcome, and confesses his malefactions. Denise discloses her sex, the husband and wife are reunited, and the story terminates comfortably.

The origin of *Cymbeline* has been usually ascribed to Boccaccio's story of Bernabo Lomellia of Genoa; but it seems likely that Shakespeare was also acquainted with the French versions of the fable. There are incidents in Shakespeare's drama which seem clearly to be borrowed from the French miracle play, and have no counterparts in Boccaccio's novel. Ostes boasts that he needs only to speak to a woman twice to obtain what he will from her on the third occasion of his addressing her. This compares with Iachimo's profession that he asks "no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference," etc. And when Berengier seeks to inflame the jealousy of Denise, he informs her that her lord does not value her the stalk of a cherry; that he has found one in Rome for whom he has so strong an affection that he cannot tear himself from her. This resembles Iachimo's description of Posthumus's method of life in Rome. But there is no hint of this in Boccaccio; his heroine Ginevra and the villain Ambrogiuolo do not interchange speech at all. He has not even seen her until he emerges from the chest which has been carried into her bed-chamber, with the aid of a poor old woman to whom the lady had been kind, and whom Ambrogiuolo had bribed to serve him.

In an old collection of stories called *Westward for Smelts* there is contained *The Tale told by the Fishwife of Standon-the-Green*, which relates in a somewhat vulgar fashion many of the incidents set forth in Boccaccio and the French romances. The scene is laid at Waltham, and the period is assigned to the troubled reign of King Henry the Sixth. The heroine is styled *Mistress Dorrill*, and the Pisanio of the tale is called *George*; otherwise the characters are unnamed. In this edition of the fable there is no mention of the chest, the bed-chamber is not described, nor is there any allusion to the mark upon the person of the wife. The villain steals a little golden crucifix which *Mistress Dorrill* had been wont to wear next her heart, and

Master Dorrill views the production of this valuable as sufficient proof that he has lost his wager. Stevens and Malone judged too hastily that Shakespeare had founded his play upon this early English version of Boccaccio's novel. It is now understood, however, that no copy of *Westward for Smelts* was published before 1620, when the poet had been dead four years. That in *Westward for Smelts* there should be no reference to the fact that the Fishwife's story had been exhibited upon the stage is not readily to be explained.

The concluding scenes of *Cymbeline*, after Imogen's life has been spared by Pisanio, are altogether independent alike of Boccaccio and of the French authorities.

Dunlop, who seems always glad to dispraise Shakespeare, remarks that the close of the drama confers as little credit upon his invention as the earlier scenes do honour to his judgment. Another critic, described as "elegant and acute," has pronounced that the scenes and characters have been most injudiciously altered: the manners of a tradesman's wife and two intoxicated Italian merchants have been bestowed upon a great princess, a British hero, and a noble Roman. And Dr. Johnson has held that "to remark upon the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection and too gross for aggravation." Against these adverse opinions may be set the applause of Schlegel, and Hazlitt, and Campbell, who pronounce *Cymbeline* to be one of the loveliest, the "most wonderful" and "most delightful" of Shakespeare's creations. Imogen, Hazlitt finds to be of all Shakespeare's women the most tender and true: "her merit is in the depth of her love, her truth and constancy." Schlegel writes: "In the character of Imogen no one feature of female excellence is omitted: her chaste tenderness, her softness and her virgin pride, her boundless resignation and her magnanimity towards her mistaken husband by whom she is unjustly persecuted, her adventures in disguise, her apparent death and her recovery, form altogether a picture equally tender and affecting."

In the office books of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King Charles the First, Mr. Payne Collier finds mention of a performance of *Cymbeline* by the king's

players, before the court, on January 1, 1633, when, it is added, the play was "well liked by the king." No earlier representation of *Cymbeline* has obtained record. After the Restoration the play was brought back to the stage in a very questionable shape, altered and maltreated by Tom D'Urfey, and bearing the new title of *The Injured Princess; or, The Fatal Wager*. This was at the Theatre Royal in 1682. New names were given to many of the characters. Iachimo was no longer an Italian; he was now Shatillion, a Frenchman; the name of Iachimo was preserved, however, and allotted to one of the lords attendant upon Cloten. Posthumus became Ursaces, and Imogen, Eugenia. Pisanio was promoted to be a lord and the father of Clarina, a new character, the confidante of the princess. The part of Guiderius was assigned to Arviragus; the name of Palladour was conferred upon the second prince. The changes throughout, indeed, are as useless as they are impudent. The scene is laid now in England and now in France, almost as though the adapter had reverted to the French romances. The dialogue is constantly tampered with, and D'Urfey adds much matter of his own contriving. Incensed at Eugenia's escape from the court, the queen orders Iachimo, the friend of Cloten, to punish Clarina, the confidante, for concealing the flight of the princess. Iachimo drags in Clarina. Pisanio draws his sword in her defence, fights with Iachimo, and kills him. Pisanio is himself wounded, however, and presently has his eyes put out by Cloten, who, in his turn, is slain by Arviragus. In the last act, Ursaces saves the life of *Cymbeline*. Shatillion enters disguised as a Briton, and is killed by Ursaces; before dying he fully acknowledges the innocence of Eugenia. The play ends with *Cymbeline*'s discovery of his sons, and the reconciliation of Ursaces and Eugenia. In the dialogue curious anachronisms occur. The Puritans are alluded to, and Ursaces bids his servant fly with a letter to "the packet-boat!" The original cast of *The Injured Princess* has not been preserved; but the play probably enjoyed some success. It was revived at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1720, and at Covent Garden in 1738. In 1720, Ryan played Ursaces, C. Bullock, Shatillion; H. Bullock, Cloten; and Boheme, Pisanio; Mrs. Bullock appearing as Eugenia. In 1738, Ryan, resigning Ursaces to Delane, personated *Cymbeline*, Tom Walker was the Shatillion, Bridge-

water the Pisanio, Chapman the Cloten, and Mrs. Templar the Eugenia of the cast. In the *Biographia Dramatica* it is noted that D'Urfe provided a prologue to *The Injured Princess* by converting to that use an epilogue he had written some years before for his comedy of *The Fool Turned Critic*.

The *Cymbeline* of Shakespeare reappeared upon the stage in 1744 at the Haymarket Theatre, under the direction of Theophilus Cibber. The Haymarket at that time enjoyed but a struggling sort of existence, being very acrimoniously regarded by the patentee-managers of Drury Lane and Covent Garden. No particular account of this revival has come down to us. In her memoirs, Colley Cibber's daughter, Mrs. Clarke, who probably took part in the performance, states that her brother Theophilus would have succeeded as a manager and "in particular by the run of *Cymbeline*," but that he was compelled to desist by an order from the Lord Chamberlain, "occasioned," as she writes, "by a jealousy of his having a likelihood of a great run of the last-mentioned play; and which would, of course, have been detrimental in some measure to the other houses." The example set by Cibber was not lost upon the Covent Garden manager. In the following season *Cymbeline* was there produced for the benefit of Woodward, and the performance was subsequently repeated. Ryan was again Posthumus, Hull appeared as Iachimo, Bridgewater as Pisanio, Woodward as Guiderius, Chapman as Cloten, and Mrs. Pritchard as Imogen. The singer Beard personated Arviragus "with the dirge new set," as the playbill stated.

In 1759, at Covent Garden, *Cymbeline* was reproduced with material alterations by Henry Hawkins, Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford. It had occurred to the professor that in *Cymbeline* the classical unities of time and place were unduly disregarded, and that the work might advantageously be "reduced to the regularity of a modern tragedy." He proceeded, therefore, to dispense with certain of the characters, the Queen and Iachimo among them, and to suppress the earlier portions of the play. He exchanged the character of Pisanio, calling him Philario, constituting him the friend instead of the servant of Leonatus, and bestowed the name of Pisanio upon an Italian, the tool of Cloten, who was deprived of all comicality and appeared throughout as a serious

personage. The part of Palador, the new name of Guiderius, was much enlarged, and certain new matter was added, Mr. Hawkins protesting that he had endeavoured to supply diction as like as possible to that of the original play. Imogen was first seen in prison, whence she was persuaded by Philario to escape disguised as a boy. The scene is laid partly at a royal castle, and partly in and about a forest in Wales. "On the whole," as Genest observes, "this is a wretched alteration." The professor's adaptation of *Cymbeline* obtained six representations, and then disappeared for ever from the scene. Imogen was played by the comic actress, Mrs. Vincent, Mrs. Bellamy having declined to undertake the character. "Gentleman" Smith appeared as Palador, Ryan as *Cymbeline*, Ross as Leonatus, and Sparks as Belarius.

Cymbeline was next revived by Garrick at Drury Lane in 1761, with certain alterations and transpositions, but without any serious tampering with the poet's text. The play was acted sixteen times during the season of its revival; a proof that it was received with favour by the audience. Garrick's biographers, however, have been curiously silent concerning his production of *Cymbeline*, and his own performance of Posthumus. To Holland was given the part of Iachimo; *Cymbeline* was represented by Tom Davies, and Cloten by Tom King. O'Brien and Palmer appeared as Guiderius and Arviragus, and Imogen was the Miss Bride whose praises Churchill sang in his *Rosciad* :

If all the wonders of eternal grace,
A person finely turned, a mould of face,
Where, union rare, Expression's lively force
With Beauty's softest magic holds discourse,
Attract the eye; if feelings, void of art,
Rouse the quick passions and inflame the heart;
If music, sweetly breathing from the tongue,
Captives the ear, Bride must not pass unsung.

He promised her, moreover, that when she had conquered her fears, and her judgment had strengthened; when the stage was relieved of "the dull slumbers of a still-life piece," and when some stale flowers which hindered her advance had withered on their stalks, had kindly dropped, then

Bride shall make her way,
And merit find a passage to the day;
Brought into action she at once shall raise
Her own renown, and justify our praise.

There was nothing in Miss Bride's subsequent career, however, to warrant these panegyrics. The lady's name remains undistinguished in histrionic annals. But

if Churchill's plaudits did not secure prosperity to Miss Bride, his frowns sufficed to quench Tom Davies, the Cymbeline of the cast. During the run of the play he wrote to Garrick: "I had the misfortune to disconcert you in one scene, for which I did immediately beg your pardon, and did attribute it to my accidentally seeing Mr. Churchill in the pit! with great truth it rendered me confused and unmindful of my business." Davies shortly afterwards retired from the stage, because, as he alleged, of Garrick's "warmth of temper." Garrick persisted, however, that it was really the Rosciad and his dread of Churchill, whose presence in the theatre always made him "confused and unhappy," that terminated the actor's career.

In 1767, at Covent Garden, Cymbeline was again represented. Posthumus was now played by William Powell, the young actor who, during Garrick's absence in Italy, had suddenly advanced to the front rank of his profession and obtained the special favour of the public, but whose promising career was abruptly terminated by his death in 1769. The Iachimo was Smith; Mr. and Mrs. Yates appearing as Cloten and Imogen. When Cymbeline was played at Drury Lane in 1770, Imogen was personated by the beautiful Mrs. Baddeley.

During later years there were performances of Cymbeline at the Haymarket and Covent Garden Theatres, Posthumus being undertaken by John Bannister and Henderson, Iachimo by Palmer and Wroughton, Cloten by Edwin and Quick, and Imogen by Mrs. Bulkley and Miss Younga. Greater interest attaches to the representations of the play at Drury Lane in 1785 and in 1787. The Posthumus of John Kemble was greatly admired. "It was," Boaden writes, "quite a learned, judicious, and in the fine burst upon Iachimo at the close, a most powerful effort." Smith reappeared as Iachimo, and was, Genest pronounces, "very happy in the lighter parts of the character;" Cloten was played by Dodd, and the Imogen was Mrs. Jordan, whose success in the part was incomplete. It was only when attired in male dress as Fidele that she seemed the Imogen of the poet. The critics decided that she had not the natural dignity of the wife of Posthumus; that she could not burst upon the insolent Iachimo in the terrors of offended virtue; "she could not wear the lightnings of scorn in her countenance." Presently Mrs. Siddons, on the occasion of her benefit in 1787, appeared for the first

time as Imogen, and her performance was held to be "peculiarly happy." She gave greatness to the character without diminishing its gentleness. She played with special force and abandonment, and her triumph was supreme. A feeling of rivalry with Mrs. Jordan was said to have inspired the actress, who was resolved to rule alone as queen of tragedy. There was one drawback: her dress was a little awkward and cumbersome. It was devised for her by her friend Mr. Hamilton, the Royal Academician, "to conceal the person as much as possible." Mrs. Siddons desired "to assume as little of the man as possible." Boaden writes of the actress's scenes as Fidele that "a figure nearer to that of a boy would by increasing the visible probability have heightened her effect with her brothers in the cave." Cymbeline was often represented about this time. In 1800, Cymbeline was revived for the benefit of Mrs. Pope, who played Imogen to the Iachimo of her husband, the Posthumus of Holman, and the Cloten of Betterton, the father of Mrs. Glover. In 1806, Iachimo was personated by George Frederick Cooke, John Kemble retaining the character of Posthumus. The Imogen was Miss Smith, afterwards known as Mrs. Bartley. Kemble was still Posthumus in 1812, and again in 1816 when Young appeared as Iachimo, with Charles Kemble as Polydore—the Cloten being now Farley and now Liston—the Imogen now Mrs. H. Johnston and now Miss Stephens. In 1823, Edmund Kean played Posthumus to Young's Iachimo; Mrs. West being the Imogen. It was with difficulty the rival tragedians had been persuaded to appear together upon the scene. A later Posthumus was Charles Kemble; and Young was sometimes tempted to undertake the part with John Cooper as his Iachimo.

Cymbeline was one of Macready's grand revivals at Drury Lane, during the season of 1842-3, but from an early period of his career he had been wont to essay alternately the parts of Posthumus and Iachimo. He was but eighteen when he first played Posthumus at Newcastle in 1811. He was Iachimo at Covent Garden in 1820, but confesses that his performance made little impression. "To Iachimo I gave no prominence," he writes; "but in subsequent years I entered with glowing ardour into the wanton mischief of the dissolute, crafty Italian." Of his Posthumus in 1833, he notes in his diary that it was acted in part with freedom, energy, and

truth, but that it was altogether wanting in finish. Four years later he criticises himself still more severely: "Acted Posthumus in a most discreditable manner, undigested, unstudied. Oh, it was most culpable to hazard so my reputation! I was ashamed of myself; I trust I shall never so commit myself again. The audience applauded, but they knew not what they did; they called for me with Miss Faucit. I refused to go on, until I found it necessary in order to hand on the lady." Miss Faucit was, of course, the Imogen of the night.

Cymbeline was frequently presented at Sadler's Wells during the management of Mr. Phelps, whose Posthumus won much applause by its vigour and pathos. The Iachimo of these performances was Mr. H. Marston; the Belarius, Mr. G. Bennett. In 1866, at Drury Lane, Cymbeline was revived for a while in order that Miss Helen Faucit might reappear in Imogen, with Mr. Anderson as Iachimo, and Mr. Walter Montgomery as Posthumus. The last performance of Cymbeline in London was at the departed Queen's Theatre, Long Acre, now a co-operative store, in 1872, when Imogen was represented by Miss Henrietta Hodson, and the characters of Posthumus, Iachimo, Belarius, and Cloten were undertaken by Messrs. George Rignold, Ryder, Marston, and Lewis Ball. Little success, however, attended the revival.

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON THE LOWER ANIMALS.

POPULAR tradition has, from time immemorial, ascribed to music a vague and mystic power over the brute creation. Birds were supposed to hush their own songs in listening to those of the divinities; shepherds drew their flocks around them while they played on the Pandean-pipe; horses thrilled and neighed responsively to martial strains with equal elation to that aroused in their riders; and serpent-charmers are said, even in the present day, to exercise their art under some occult protection derived from cadences which, however, are rather cacophonous than tuneful. Poetry, mythology, and ancient metaphor abound with such illustrations, while parallel examples are not wanting in modern works on natural history. It may be doubted, nevertheless, whether any such exalted influence as that which music possesses for man really exists in reference to animals; and whether the agitation

which they sometimes evince at the sound be not simply the result of a peculiar intonation affecting the auditory apparatus without any higher or further emotion whatever.

We know that certain musical vibrations are more acutely perceptible to the sense of hearing, and more durable in their spread and penetration, than those evoked by other causes. If, for instance, a violin or piano be played in a room full of people who are talking loudly, the instrument will be heard at a distance where the voices are inaudible, though the volume of the latter may apparently greatly exceed that of the former to the appreciation of those present. And we unconsciously recognise this fact in a marked degree in our dealings with animals, especially those which are domesticated. Thus we whistle to a dog, instead of calling it, knowing that the sound will not only extend farther, but that it will strike with much greater force and instantaneous consciousness upon his tympanum wherever he may be. So, too, we "chirrup" to a bird, and so in many countries, cattle are summoned by the winding of a horn. But, in all these, it is merely what we may term the mechanical properties of the special sound that we employ, ceasing with its material concussion upon the internal ear and a common reflex action—nothing of what we are accustomed to associate with the idea of music.

That animals may be taught to associate certain actions with certain tunes, as a trick, is an undoubted fact, which is proved by the performing horses and elephants in scores of circuses. Some of them, too, have shown a very inconvenient "ear for music," in their recognition of the air to which they were accustomed to stand on their hind legs or turn somersaults, long after the necessity of exhibiting those feats had passed away, causing considerable embarrassment by their repetition in wholly inappropriate spheres of action. But this, again, is obviously only reflex action, not a mental emotion.

Whatever the *modus operandi* may be, musical sounds have certainly a peculiar effect on brutes at times, though whether this is of a pleasurable nature or otherwise seems to be not quite clear. In a garden, where a guitar was often played, it was observed that the cows in an adjoining meadow invariably came to that part of the hedge nearest to the point from which the strains proceeded; and it was found that they could be lured in this way all

round the field, without catching sight of the performer or having any other inducement to follow. Sheep were affected in a somewhat similar manner, but in a less degree; goats still less; horses, pigs, and poultry not at all. Canaries will usually begin to sing and parrots to exercise their vocabulary when they hear a piano. So far, these creatures would appear to manifest delight; but how about a cat or dog? The latter puts its tail between its legs and howls dismally at the first note of either vocal or instrumental music, though it can be accustomed to tolerate both with equanimity after a time; while pussy lashes her sides, cries remonstrantly, and, jumping on the musician's lap, seems to rub and paw an appeal that the unwonted and mysterious visitation which so disturbs her nerves may cease, particularly during singing. With these, then, one would infer that the sensations produced are anything but agreeable; but it is rather singular that, although cat and dog are apparently distressed, both run to the piano or performer and remain there as long as the cause of their excitement continues, neither endeavouring to escape as they would from any other source of terror or annoyance.

It is thought that there are sounds emitted by the insect world of so intensely high a pitch that the human ear is incapable of appreciating them; indeed, it is almost proved that such is the case by observation of the mechanism for their production, and the agitation betrayed by other animals, contiguous, but not within the range of vision, when it is set in motion. Thus, as ants are supposed to have a sense of sight beyond anything that we can conceive, and to see colours which are unknown to us, so it may be presumed that many creatures have a power of hearing which exceeds, not only in degree, but in quality, the same sense in man.

In some parts of the world there is a superstition that fish can be attracted to the surface of the water by music, and it is no uncommon spectacle to see an Indian standing in the bow of his canoe with spear poised, while his companion—usually a child—elicits a few plaintive notes from a reed at intervals. Such a notion is, of course, absurd, since fish give very few signs of hearing proper, and are only affected by sounds of such violence that, communicating their vibration to the water, they can be appreciated by common

sensibility, just as a person who is "stone deaf" can perceive and experience a disagreeable sensation on the report of a cannon near at hand. Tame fish confined in an aquarium may not be alarmed at the most boisterous movements or moderately loud noises close to them, but, if the glass be thin, the slightest tap will cause them to flash away. It is curious that the so-called "singing-fish" of the Indian Ocean and Spanish Main is yet unknown to naturalists—that is to say, the fish itself may be known, and no doubt is, but the particular species which emits the remarkable sounds has not been identified, nor has the precise mode of their production been discovered, though many hypotheses have been framed. I have heard them on several occasions on still nights, lying at anchor off Greytown—a rhythmical, monotonous, but not unmusical twanging, like the strokes of a Jew's-harp, faintly heard on deck, but loudly audible in the hold, especially of an iron ship, and proceeding apparently from directly underneath her keel. Black sailors attribute a supernatural origin to these tinklings, and declare that they are caused by seamen who have found a watery grave, trying to get back into the vessel. I believe that nothing would induce a nigger to go below when this harmonious hammering is heard.

Spiders have been supposed to be peculiarly susceptible to the influence of music. The venomous tarantula was said to be rendered docile and harmless by it, while the dancing paroxysms of its bitten victim were immediately exorcised by soothing melodies. In an old medical volume, written by one Peter Shaw, M.D., and "Printed for T. Longman at the Ship in Pater-noster Row, m.dcc.xvi.," I find the bite of this insect to be characterised, amongst other symptoms, by "mournful complaints when questioned, a melancholy look, and the patient points to his breast;" also, that "the symptoms usually return the next year;" and that "music is reputed the only cure; but this must be of a particular kind, which can only be found out by trial." Peter Shaw, M.D., is evidently not the man to commit himself; but, unfortunately, trial has found out the imposture of the saltatory antics instead of the particular kind of tune requisite for their remedy.

But it is among reptiles that we should find this influence most strikingly manifested, according to popular opinion—an opinion so widely prevalent, so universally

received, that I hesitate in expressing my own incredulity. Yet I am bound to confess that some years' close acquaintanceship and observation of the order enable me to see nothing of that perception of music which is attributed to them, greatly as I should desire to share a belief which has much beauty and poetry to commend it to the imagination. Nor, indeed, can I find that their appreciation of mere sound is in any way disproportionate to what might be expected from their lowly-organised auditory apparatus. Snake-charming I think we may dismiss from consideration in this paper. My own snakes, as I have before remarked, are constantly within hearing of—or perhaps I should more correctly say, close to—a piano, violoncello, or other instrument, and have been subjected to many experiments, under all sorts of conditions, with a view to testing this question, but notwithstanding that I have seen East Indian coolies, Egyptians, and other jugglers play their pipes and gourds while serpents waved their heads about, I cannot honestly say that I believe I have ever witnessed any emotion on the part of such a reptile from this cause. With lizards the case wears an aspect of greater probability, since the smaller species, such as some of the *Geccotidæ*, the *Lacertidæ*, and the *Iguanidæ*, certainly betray a sense of musical vibrations. Little geckos and other house-lizards, if they do not exactly “come out to listen,” as they are reputed to do, will stop instantly in their flight over walls and floor when a note is struck, and remain motionless for some seconds, as though actually listening for its repetition; and I have seen taraguiras in a garden “mesmerised” by a guitar in the same way. But it is to be observed that in neither instance is the mesmerism complete enough to prevent their eluding capture, and that if the music be continued they soon become habituated to it, and resume their wonted movements. I am inclined to attribute the effect to the reception of the air-waves by the general sensibility of the cutaneous surface, the feeling of what is most likely a disagreeable thrill, rather than to any impression on the special sense of hearing. Sitting at an open grand piano one day, looking at some manuscript, but not touching the keys, a “legatitia,” making his way down the wall, against which the instrument stood, by a series of running crooked jerks, caught my eye, his little sprawling hands

and iridescent body sharply defined against the white background. On the farther end of the piano lay a paper of “dulces;” this had attracted a swarm of flies, and the flies in their turn attracted the legatitia. Down he came, with abrupt suspicious darts and turns to this side and that, until he stood on the level ground of the pianotop, paused, elevated his tiny bright sharp head, flitted half across it, and paused again. Just as he began to run once more, having cautiously brought my hands and feet into position, I struck a tremendous double chord with the hard pedal down. Poor little chap! I thought I had killed him. He was absolutely knocked off his legs, and turned over on his back, where he lay feebly kicking. Before I could reach him, however, he had recovered, regained his feet, flashed up the wall, and disappeared into a crevice. I expect that that lizard, at any rate, had a very low opinion of music afterwards.

The true auditory function in all reptiles is dull and imperfect. A snake perceives the shock of approaching footsteps on the earth and evades them, or takes instant alarm at the falling of a shadow, whereas the noise of laughter and voices in close proximity to it are often powerless to disturb it. That they are not actually deaf can be demonstrated by experiment as well as dissection. Some tree-frogs were shown to me the other day, which came peeping out from among the leaves they so exactly matched, to be regaled with worms on the invitation of a shrill chirp; and a huge teguexin lizard of my own communicates a small earthquake to the quiet mound of hay and moss under which he usually lies buried, and waddles forth in response to a certain whistle, shooting out his long red tongue in confident expectation of a dead mouse or bit of raw meat.

But in proof that their sense of hearing must be not only defective in acuteness but anomalous in its action compared with that of higher animals, I will give by way of conclusion an incident which I witnessed several years ago in Demerara.

It was either a Christmas or New Year's Day—I forget which, but I know it was a broiling hot one, whatever the date may have been. I had arrived in the river very early in the morning, and availing myself of the oft-repeated invitation of a hospitable planter whose estate was situated a little way up-country, I hurried ashore at daybreak, took the first train from Georgetown to Mahaica, and drove from

thence to my friend's house, which lay some miles further inland. Thus it was that I found myself after breakfast—something p.m.—lying at full length and lazily oscillating to and fro in one of the grass hammocks with which his verandah was furnished, coatless, shoeless—for we were a bachelor party—and half asleep.

The mid-day heat was intense; outside, all earth and air and sky seemed to glow and simmer like molten brass; but in the verandah we lay in a green twilight, for all the jalousies were closed, as no breath of wind was stirring. Suddenly I was roused by a light touch on the elbow, and turning, saw a grinning black face at my side—remotely connected, no doubt, with a pair of bare feet, which must have crept very stealthily over the boards of the inner room.

"I beg you, sar," whispered the owner, displaying his very molars in his delight and excitement as he pointed towards the jalousies—"I beg you, sar; dar's a big kamoodie in de garden, an' Mist' Fred's going shoot 'im."

Mr. Fred was my host's nephew, who happened to be upstairs, and the message was specially addressed to me on account of my known predilection for "varmints." But it had the effect of bringing us all on our feet to peer out through the venetians, making as little noise as possible lest we should disturb the quarry. It was not much, however, that we could see from our point of espial. A small trench or ditch led from a pond in the centre of the garden, to carry off its overflow, down to the muddy canal which traversed the estate, and beyond some movement among the weeds with which this ditch was filled, nothing was at first visible to us.

Our friend above of course had a full view of the interior from his elevated position, and had seen a gigantic "water-kamoodie"—the anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*) properly, as in this instance, though the term is applied in Guiana to other snakes as well—leave the canal and come up the ditch towards the house, being attracted, it was afterwards surmised, by a pet kid which was tethered near the corner of the verandah. Sending for a gun, he fired both barrels at it, the explosion directly over our heads making us jump. Whether it was that the heat of the day or the glitter of the sun on the reptile's wet scales affected Mist' Fred's aim, certain it is that neither of his bullets had the anaconda for their billet.

But the extraordinary part of the business was the serpent's apparent indifference. It reared its immense head about two feet from the ditch—so affording us a sight of it—and remained without motion for perhaps half a minute, with its great round black spots showing in marked contrast to the yellowish-brown ground-colour, and its white throat gleaming like silver; then, gently descending below the bank again, we could perceive by the parting of the tall grasses that it continued its onward course. Our host here ran into the house, fetched a pistol, and throwing open one of the jalousies, waited until the reptile became visible at the bend of the trench, when he pulled the trigger. But the snake bore a charmed life, for the weapon missed fire, and the hammer simply descended with a sharp click. This, however, was sufficient to give the alarm, which the two reports of the gun had failed to do. The reptile turned on the instant and literally flew back to the canal, cutting the weeds and causing the water in the ditch to fly up as it spun round in its own curve throughout the whole length of its body. Probably the higher elevation of the first concussions may in some way account for it, though I cannot see the immediate explanation.

On comparing notes and measuring the ground subsequently, we estimated the length of this anaconda at thirty-two or thirty-three feet.

A DAY IN CHESTER.

As a town, Chester is one of the quaintest and most satisfactory in the country, and repays a visit almost as well as some of the show towns abroad—nay, being a modest place, there is a sense of surprise and unexpectedness in the entertainment it offers without pretence or proclamation. It has fine air, fine country about it, walls, cathedral, town-hall, old houses, old inns, and old associations, and everything handsome. A day may be spent there with profit, though such places, for proper appreciation, require a short residence.

Connected with the station is the Queen Hotel, well known and welcome to travellers as friendly and comfortable shelter in the dead hours of midnight, where at two a.m. the friendly porter is found waiting—the passages all ablaze with cheerful gas—to lead the way to comfortable bed and soothing slumbers; where, entombing

oneself in the sheets, one may find comfort in Leigh Hunt's selfish epicureanism by recalling the images of his fellow-passengers boxed up, in cramped attitudes vainly seeking sleep on their hard and upright cushions, and scouring along to London.

It is always curious to see these up-all-night hostels in broad sunlight—such as The Lord Warden, at Dover—which seem to have a double life: that in the daytime so tranquil and serious, that at night so full of glare and sleeplessness.

A tram-car takes you from the station for some half a mile or so before reaching the town proper, and it is curious that these highly modern institutions should chime in harmoniously with ancient cities. In Ghent and Brussels they do not seem discordant with the old streets and buildings. As we go jingling through the broad and open causeway, some stray, quaint, old mansions on either side come into view—decrepit and shaky in appearance, projecting full over the pavement and well crutched up on sound pillars. These survivals are, after all, hale and hearty, for in Chester there appears to be no hurry to get rid of the falling or broken-down house. So far from any one asking why it cumbers the ground, there is an expressed wish that it should do so as long as possible. One of these stray veterans thus holds his ground, with a bending, wavy, slated roof, and a black and white framework in front, and proudly labelled 1577. He is propped on some rude crooked joists. We walk under his first storey; but I fear he cannot hold out very long.

But we now reach the genuine streets where the "Chester rows" display themselves, and it must be said that nothing in a Normandy town offers anything better. These little arcades over the shops, with rails or balconies from which you can look down into the street, are reached by little flights of steps at convenient intervals, and have the quaintest air in the world. The houses are surmounted by gables with brown, well-varnished, and carved woodwork. You can walk along the "Row," where there are shops also over the streets, but shops on a higher storey. And although the whole has a rather warped look, it is sound and in good condition.

Wandering about listlessly, as is only fitting in these sleepy old towns, an effect of being in Ghent is produced by coming towards that sort of open place

whence there rises the modern town-hall—in a florid taste, and which with its central towers, and wings, and roof, with the occasional chiming of its bells, really suggests some Belgian Hotel de Ville, and looks as if it were an old edifice restored. Close by rises the handsome and finely-restored cathedral, with its massive, almost rude central tower, gamboge-tinted, as Lamb would call it, being all built of the warm and genial red sandstone. Here it spreads out its four great arms over a rich green sward, and is in itself well worthy of a journey to see. It is curious what an air of peace and tranquillity these old cathedrals have spread all about them; how everything seems peaceful, if not sleepy, within range of their influence. Inside, the effect is surprisingly mellow, rich, and harmonious; the restorations have been done without any coarse violence, while there is a richness of detail and the proper religious light, which contrasts happily with the glaring flaring tiles, the scraped chalky walks, and "spiky" carvings of certain restored fanes we wot of.

It is pleasant to find that the natives have still such pride in their town, that such houses as have to be rebuilt have been restored so as to be in keeping with the others. But at the same time there are streets of mean brick buildings in the worst taste, and possibly another score of years may see the old town with these old survivals swept away, and the whole "brought up to the measure," as a grand old man would say, of modern requirements. Such a change will certainly impoverish the public stock of pleasure. The Grosvenor Hotel, a large establishment in the centre of the town, and probably hostile to The Queen, has made a clumsy but ineffective effort to put the old clothes on a modern body, and soars aloft with ponderous gabled storeys, propped on a solid arcade. There are innumerable old inns, too, with quaint names—Golden Lion, The Pied Mule—all venerable, sufficiently gabled. Old arches cross the streets at picturesque points, making a break in the walls, from the top of which you see natives looking down with quaint effect.

Ascending a flight of steps close by one of the arches that span the street, we find ourselves on the walls, which run completely round the old city, and the top of which, some six feet wide, has been flagged and fashioned into a walk, with parapets on both sides. A good-natured inscription

set up by the town invites the stranger to begin his peregrination in the direction of the left hand, as he will enjoy the better view. This little act of courtesy reads gracefully enough, for we do not generally find municipals thus considerate. A more agreeable or more varied walk, of say three quarters of an hour, it would not be possible to find, the air so fresh and keen, the views so contrasted. You return to the spot whence you started. You pass the back of the cathedral and its green close on the left hand, while to the right stretches away a fine breadth of country, well-wooded and fertile. By-and-by you are sure to be noted by an apparently obliging "walker on the wall," who remarks with cordial sympathy: Would you like to see Mr. Gladstone's seat? (meaning his residence). On some encouragement he goes on: "Yes, sir, over yonder is Mr. Gladstone's seat," a piece of information by which he seeks to gain a livelihood—necessarily precarious, according to the character of those with whom he speaks.

Next we pass the primitive-looking race-course, which once enjoyed a high reputation when "the Cup" brought crowds from all parts of the kingdom. Now the interest has grown feeble. But the course, seen from the railway, with its fringe of honest old-fashioned brick houses looking down on it, and sheltered by the brown walls, with its rich green sward, is a pleasant object.

We pass it by, and next come to a pretty stretch of the river, overhung with trees, recalling the Thames at Richmond, and spanned by a one-arched bridge, not inelegant, where are pretty boats gliding along in sunlight and shade—marks and tokens of the annual regatta—a challenge for sympathy with that jovial miller who gave celebrity to the river from his rather selfish philosophy.

Here rises the copper-coloured Chester Castle, not unpicturesque, and associated with Fenian raids and stratagems; here there is a stray splash or patch of crimson—a soldier or two on guard looking down on the placid slow-moving river—thrown out on the hot coppery background of the castle wall. So we stroll on from this curious perch, surveying as we go the new and old houses and quaint streets, or the broad champaign. Here is that gabled well-varnished building labelled God's Providence House, on whose history Mrs. Linnæus Banks has written a story; but this proves to be not even a restoration,

but a total reconstruction. Finally, here we are arrived at the point from whence we started.

It is now evening, and the narrow streets have quite filled, as in a foreign town, with gossiping promenaders and groups standing to talk. The "Rows" are lit up, and housewives lean carelessly on the balustrades to talk with those below or look up and down the street.

It seems like old Nuremberg city. Here in front of the town-hall is a crowd listening to two preachers, who chant at the end of every verse that whatever betides, and under a variety of ingeniously supposed conditions, they "will keep the line." A tipsy member of the audience persists in interrupting with irreverent jocularities until he is led off by the police. Hard by The Cloche de Corneville is ringing out its eternal jangle in a sort of murky chamber, full of gloom, with an open roof. The stage is fitted on the orchestra and the leading characters are palpably seen descending and ascending the steps. The accompaniment is a piano and harmonium. The whole is scarcely recognisable for the vast amount of gag introduced by the comic men, notably the Baillie, who appears to be the most favourite of modern humorous characters. Finally, towards midnight we are at the busy station once more, waiting for the London express to come screaming and rumbling in. And thus with little trouble and no expense one of those cheap, agreeable, and satisfactory days that come so seldom has been secured, but which is put by in the cupboard of memory.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II.

CHAPTER VI. "FAR ABOVE RUBIES."

"TURTLE assures me that my wife is better?"

"I think she is better—in the sense of being in less suffering."

The first speaker was Squire Stirling, of Dale End; the second, the Rev. Cuthbert Deane, Vicar of St. Mary's-in-the-Fields.

It was a strange fact that both men had the habit of carrying their hands folded behind their backs as they walked. So far, then, resemblance between the two pacing up and down the long terrace held good. But no further.

Cuthbert Deane was upright as a dart, and held his head rather thrown back than bowed. His eyes, steady, out-looking, grave, yet full of the sweet clear light of content, seemed to watch life placidly, thankful for the part in it that God had called upon him to fill.

Geoffrey Stirling, since last we saw him, appeared to have lost several inches of height, since his chest had hollowed, and he had acquired an habitual stoop of the shoulders, whose slight gauntness had grown to attenuation.

His eyes, always deep-set beneath prominent eye-bones, were now abnormally sunken, while their orbits were leaden-coloured, like those of one who never knows a sleep that is restful and dreamless. A strange restlessness possessed him; a fevered longing to be plunged into this interest or that. He was more voluble than of yore, making use of the same graceful gestures as aids to words, yet with an intensified fire in eyes and voice, and, when deeply moved, subject to a sudden twitching of the firm-set lips that told a tale of highly-strung nerves, and called forth many shakings of the head, and necessitated many pinches of snuff, on the part of Dr. Turtle.

Not in a week, or a month, or a year, had these changes come upon Geoffrey Stirling. Their approach and development had been a gradual process, spread over a span of years; a process noticed least by those most constantly near him, but striking those who only saw him at intervals vividly, and causing such to remark that it was a marvel so lucky a man—a man, so to say, at whose feet Fortune had emptied her goodliest gifts—should age so rapidly, and “carry his years” with such poor grace.

Yet those who saw him in the company of others hardly realised how changed he was. Least of all could those who saw him in the society of his son Ralph judge of this. It almost seemed as though a reflected light of youth, and hope, and brightness shone upon him, irradiating from that other, as you may see a barren and hoary hill, rosy and beautiful with the exquisite tender glow of an early summer morning. He would watch the stripling, lithe, supple, bright-eyed, full of youthful witchery and manly boldness; listen to him, laugh at him and with him, in such fashion that the eyes of Cuthbert Deane and Alice his wife had been known to moisten with unshed tears at the sight;

reading some hidden tragedy in so much love, yet lacking the key whereby to read it aright.

There were such curious features about the whole thing, said Alice, knitting her delicate brows and looking wise over it; for if you loved anything very dearly, wasn't it natural to try and keep it by your side?

“Suppose,” said this gentle student of humanity (not without a change of colour and a quickly-suppressed sigh either), “that you and I, husband, had a son like Ralph; do you think we should ever be able to bear him out of our sight?”

“At that rate, my dear,” the vicar would reply, “I fear we should make a sad molly-coddle of him.”

He knew (who better?) that in the heart of the happiest of wives was an empty corner, and so he spoke half-jestingly, making believe to be blind to the secret yearning in his darling's heart.

“But, Cuthbert,” she persisted, standing behind his chair with one hand upon his broad shoulder, and the other touching the short crisp curls on his temples lovingly, “it does seem strange, doesn't it? the passionate longing Mr. Stirling shows for Ralph's return, and then, when he has got him, the restless craving to have him gone again.”

Alicia was not the only one in Becklington who puzzled over these anomalies of feeling on the part of the squire; but neither she nor anyone else came to any satisfactory conclusion in the matter, having to be content with a general assertion that it was “hard on the lad's mother.”

Not that the vicar's wife thought this was so. She knew Mrs. Geoffrey better; she could fathom a shallow, as well as a deep nature. She recognised the fact that if his wife had fretted over Ralph's long absences—if the mother-hunger had pined upon her heart, dimming her eyes and paling her cheek—Geoffrey Stirling would have kept the lad more at home.

The peculiar bent taken by any nature generally increases with age, as the tree that grows awry grows more and more crookedly with each summer's growth.

Mrs. Geoffrey had set up early in life as two things: a beauty and a chronic sufferer. In the first capacity she resented the fact that Ralph's young head towered far above her own; in the second his high spirits and youthful zest made him trying to her.

"I'm sure, Nurse Prettyman," she would say pettishly, "no one would ever take Master Ralph to be my son."

"Well, I don't know as they rightly would," that dame would answer, with a deeper meaning in her words than her mistress guessed; upon which Mrs. Geoffrey would smile at the pale, pretty image in her mirror, and recall the days when Ralph, attired in velvet and lace, formed an adjunct to, not a flaw, in the family picture.

Ralph was a manly fellow, though sometimes apt to be moody and dreamy; passionately fond of riding, of Nature, and of the books he liked—rather ready to neglect those he didn't—and with a passionate love of music implanted in his very soul.

Naturally he got tired at times of hearing the same stories over and over again as he lounged in his mother's boudoir—the story of the cavalier who vowed he would give, oh! all sorts of fine things to kiss her hand, the hand that had been looked upon as a "model;" the story of the artist who had seen her seated at her harp, and humbly asked permission to paint her as Erin, with her back hair down.

"But you never play the harp now, mother," the lad said one day, apropos of this touching reminiscence; "I wish you did. It always stands there tied up in that holland thing like a child in a big pinafore—and in the corner for being naughty too."

"My dear," said Mrs. Geoffrey, closing her eyes with languid grace, "you forget. I am not equal to such exertion nowadays, and, Ralph"—here a slight cough became tiresome—"how often am I to ask you to address me in a less vulgar homely way! Such terms are all very well for the lower classes"—here the cough again came to the fore, and it must be chronicled that Ralph, cramming his hands into the depths of his pockets, went out of the room whistling—a greater enormity, if possible, in the eyes of Mrs. Geoffrey, than the use of the word "mother."

It was not probable that a woman of such flimsy calibre as this would fret much after anything, save the loss of her own beauty, or a lack of what she considered her due in the way of pity and sympathy in her various ailments; not even after her only child.

On the two former subjects she had not much to complain of; for time dealt very tenderly with her—so did her husband, so did Nurse Prettyman. so did the vicar's

wife and the vicar himself. That fragile loveliness of hers had been all her life long a passport to the tenderness of the world around her. Who could be harsh to a thing so fair, and with so little of earth about it, as far as looks went?

Her hand, small as a child's, with soft transparent fingers and pink palm, was in itself a plea for consideration; the helpless appealing blue eyes (appealing to everyone alike, for no one quite knew what) seemed to beg your kind offices, and disarm your criticisms.

Mrs. Geoffrey was going to keep her beauty to the last.

And the last was not far off now. For; as her husband and Cuthbert Deane paced to and fro along the terrace-walk where she had trailed her pretty silks, and ambled graciously, her face shaded with dainty laces, and flowers at her breast; the clock ticking on the high carved mantel-shelf of her room seemed to mock her with the haste it made, and she clasped Alicia's hand as if she would never let it go.

Alicia had helped her in so many troubles; she would surely help her now!

This terrible stabbing pain in her chest, as if every breath she drew were a knife seeking her heart, would pass. Dr. Turtle had come and brought her some new drug to quiet her pain. She was better already, and would soon fall asleep (but never let go Alicia's hand), and then wake almost well again.

"She must be longing to see Ralph now," thought the vicar's wife, grave, sweet, helpful, holding that fragile hand in hers, and watching the face where burnt two fever-spots, hot and bright as rose-petals in the sun.

"Is there anything you want, dear?" she said, noting a little restless movement, and hoping the mother's heart was astir.

"Yes"—the word came with a sob like that of a grieving child—"yes—to get well——"

Poor soul! she had never meant to get ill in earnest.

It had been charming, that being never quite strong, that taking her place in the first and foremost rank with everybody because she "needed so much care." A pleasant pastime, too, comparing notes with other sickly women, thinking how much daintier were her invalid robes than theirs; how much more commonplace their symptoms; how lacking in elegance their doctors compared to Dr. Turtle.

All this had been delightful, and, since Geoffrey's accession to fortune, she had played the rôle in a wider sphere, and before a more distinguished audience?

Great ladies had made a pet of Mrs. Geoffrey; had wished to experiment upon her case with their favourite nostrums; had pitied her for belonging to that interesting army of martyrs, people who are "never well."

Yes; she had been very happy at Dale End; a great deal too happy to remember, when the vicar brought home his bride to the vicarage, that there must be a certain trial to that patient woman in seeing strangers in her old home, and in visiting that home under strange and new conditions.

It was Geoffrey Stirling who thought of that; Geoffrey Stirling who treated Alicia with a chivalrous deference when she came to Dale End, a tender sympathetic reverence, as though she were the chatelaine of the old manor, and he but a sojourner and stranger within its gates at her sweet will.

It had been bitter to her just that once, for she fancied she saw her father bustling about the dear familiar rooms; she heard those ghosts of sounds never to be heard on earth again, that most of us are fated to listen to at one time or other in our lives—the ghost of a footfall, of a voice, of an uttered name.

Then her great love for her husband, the never-fading sunshine that his love for her made about her pathway, and in her passionate heart, triumphed over all else; she visited Dale End without sadness, and, though always loving it "for the old sake's sake," setting it a little lower than that lesser home of her own, where, even in the darkest, dreariest days, there was a sunshine within that knew no waning.

Alicia had grown fond of Mrs. Geoffrey, in the same way as she might have grown fond of a pretty child, and—which was the stranger of the two—Mrs. Geoffrey had grown fond of her; had grown to rely upon her, to look to her—sometimes to be guided by her.

As has been already said, the poor lady had never meant to be really ill—that is, not unromantically, disagreeably so.

But, unfortunately, people who constantly play at being a thing, sometimes end in unpremeditated reality.

Constant dwelling upon self; lack of healthy exercise, having recourse to stimulating narcotics as antidotes to hysteria,

all these things predispose to serious illness, and, a violent cold having settled upon Mrs. Geoffrey's lungs, the enfeebled system could make no effort to fight against the malady.

For the first time in her life she found herself confronted with a foe with whom appealing looks availed her nothing. Her bewilderment and dismay were touching to see. Geoffrey had anticipated her every wish—always. Why could he do nothing now? Dr. Turtle had met every one of her symptoms all these years most skilfully—she had told Lady Sinclair so only a week ago—and now, why did he let her go on suffering like this? Please to fetch Alicia at once; never let Alicia leave her again, even for a moment. The wish was fated to be nearer the truth than she who uttered it imagined.

For the end was not far off now, and Alicia was still by her side, holding the little burning hand, and moistening the parched and parted lips.

Meanwhile, out on the long terrace, the two men were pacing slowly up and down in the beautiful dying light of the autumn day. Winter was near at hand. From russet, and gold, and red, the leaves had turned to brown—shrivelled, died, dropped. Yet Robin sang on a naked bough none the less sweetly than when he piped from a bower of leaves; and a flood of glorious ruddy light made even the bare trees beautiful, while as to the old cedar on the lawn, it looked like a fairy-tree (as indeed the vicar always thought it, even when it was dripping with rain, or peering forth, all blurred and indistinct, from under a shroud of fog).

"What an evening for the time of year!" said Geoffrey Stirling, standing a moment to look at the sun-bathed landscape at their feet; "the air is as warm as though it were May instead of close on November." Then he turned sharply on his companion.

"Then you think she's better?"

"I said—easier," replied the vicar.

He was a man who could not drape the truth to give it a fair semblance; and yet his bluntness of speech hurt less than another's kindly prevarication.

"Well, easier—that is something. She is one who cannot bear pain."

"She is a person one would fain spare all possible pain, certainly; and I think Alicia is a good hand at that."

"At what is she not a good hand? Cuthbert Deane, I tell you what it is, that wife of yours is a pearl among women."

"A jewel of great price."

"It is hard to set a value on such women; they are the salt of life."

"The Psalmist puts it best, Geoffrey—'far above rubies.'"

"Why, she has never left my poor girl since the day she was taken ill!"

"She never will leave her—while there is need to stay."

Squire Stirling cast a rapid startled glance at the vicar. His eyes seemed to flash and scintillate in their deep orbits.

"You don't mean—ah yes, I see, of course—you mean until she is about again."

"No, I do not."

"You don't mean—you don't think my poor girl is going to die? Why, it seems a cruel thing even to say the words. It is like speaking of a child, a bird—any unthinking creature that loves the sunshine and the pleasant things of life—passing away into darkness."

He shuddered, drawing his shoulders together, but still paced on.

When he spoke next it was almost as if he were speaking to himself, as if he had forgotten he was not alone.

"Death is very awful when it comes home to one, and knocks at one's own gates, and not at one's neighbour's. I don't think I am a coward (if I had been a coward I could not have lived). No, no, not that; but it is awful to think of her, poor pretty Lucy!"

"Still, we cannot always keep even those we love best; and surely, to the Christian, death ought not to be as the door that leads into darkness. I remember even when that poor fellow Gabriel Devanant—What is it?"

The vicar might well ask.

Squire Stirling had started violently, and turned his face towards the house.

"You thought you heard someone call? Shall I go and see? You must have fancied something, you have grown so pale. Sit down on the seat under the larch, and I will go and see."

"No, no, there is no need. It was a fancy—only a fancy; my nerves are shaken with the long disquiet. What you have said, too, has been a shock to me. I did not understand from Turtle's manner that he thought unfavourably of the case."

"Turtle's manner is unfortunate. He is too polished to be candid; and at such times as this candour is helpful."

"Yes," answered the other, tossing back the grizzled locks from his brow; "yes, candour is best; but Turtle means well—he means well."

Both the men were bareheaded, the warmth of the evening being so exceptional, and they had strolled out not meaning to stay.

Now, as the clear light fell on Geoffrey Stirling's face, the vicar noticed, as though it were some new thing brought to his notice, the hollowness of the lines about the brow; the tracery of blue veins just above the temples from which the hair had been but just put back; the strange wax-like transparency of the sensitive nostrils; the cavernous sunken eyes.

"How worn he is—how worn!" he thought pityingly; "and this sorrow so near at hand. How will he bear it?"

"I have been afraid," said Mr. Stirling, after a silence broken only by the beat of their measured footsteps, "that she should ask—"

Here he hesitated a moment.

The vicar finished the sentence:

"For Ralph?"

"Yes; and I have asked myself what should I do? Because, you see, Ralph is out of reach."

"You hardly know exactly where he is yourself, do you?"

"Well, no, not to a mile or so" (this with a smile, as he fumbled in the breast-pocket of his coat). "His tutor's last letter was from—let me see—here it is; yes, from Buffalo, a primitive sort of place, not far from Niagara. 'The country about here is most interesting; Ralph is delighted with everything.' Nothing can be more satisfactory, you see, as far as they are concerned, and they expect to be home by Christmas. They will be starting soon. What is the name of the ship? Let me see—here it is, the Aladdin, from New York to Liverpool. Bless the lad! it will be—"

Suddenly he faltered in his speech, and laid a heavy hand on Cuthbert's arm.

"I was going to say like sunshine in the old place to see him, but no—no, if he comes to a sorrowing home, there'll be no sunshine for me or for him."

"Geoffrey," said the vicar, speaking with the air of a man who has made up his mind to say a thing, and intends to say it, "you and I are very old friends. We might say things to each other that in other people would seem, well—impertinences, and I should like to say this to you now: I really think you are hard upon your wife, and upon yourself too, in having that boy so much away from home."

"You do, do you?" said Geoffrey, with

one of those sharp changes of manner and voice that were characteristic of him.

"Yes," replied Cuthbert, watching the half-closed gleaming eyes of his companion, marvelling at such deep disturbance for so slight a thing; "and so does Alicia."

"It is very kind of you and of Alicia to put yourselves to so much trouble about my affairs. I ought to be deeply grateful to you both; let us hope—for the sake of human nature—that I am."

He laughed, hugging himself, as one who rejoiced in the flavour of a secret jest, cracked with himself:

"Let us hope I am—let us hope I am."

"I have sometimes wondered too——" began the unperturbed vicar.

"Oh, you have wondered too, as well as thought, have you?" put in Geoffrey, still watching his companion keenly out of narrowed lids.

"Yes, I have wondered—we have wondered—that since you evidently (and rightly, too, to a reasonable extent, there can be no doubt of that) think travelling good for a young man, you have not sent Ralph (always with his excellent tutor, of course) to Barbadoes—let him see into the working of the estates there—learn something of business."

"Ta! ta! ta!" said Geoffrey, accompanying the exclamation with impatient snapping of his fingers; "what webs of suggestions you and the good wife have been weaving. Barbadoes indeed! What next? Do you think it would refine and educate Master Ralph to let him see my overseer have the niggers whipped? Would you have the boy spend his time among the cane-tracts—eh? No, no; he'll have to give his mind to it all one of these days; but not yet—not yet. Meanwhile I have an excellent agent out there, and things thrive with me, Cuthbert. I'm a richer man every year. Ralph shall be the largest land-owner in the county yet; do you hear that, my friend? Everything I touch turns to gold. No other plantations yield what mine do; and here at home in England if I take shares in a concern it doubles

or trebles its capital in a year. I bear a charmed life, I tell you, a charmed life; fate itself can't fight against me. As to Ralph, let him be; he's best as he is. I hate a man who is full of narrow-minded insular prejudices. Ralph will never be that. I hate a man that hasn't seen the world. Ralph will never be that. Stay till you see him again; stay till he comes home to keep Christmas with us. You were away last time he was at home—away for one of your 'parson's holidays'—you didn't see him. Ah, Cuthbert, he's a sight to make an old man young, is that bright boy of mine!"

The light, the glory of love, the passion that lit up his face into an almost unearthly beauty, blotting out all the haggard lines, softening the sinister set of the lips, made the vicar marvel not a little; but, even as he marvelled, all thought of Geoffrey was swept from his mind, save as of one needing instant help and sustaining, for he heard the voice of Alicia his wife calling on her husband's name, and by that voice's sound he knew that Azrael, Angel of Death, had touched a human heart and stilled its beating for ever.

"What is it? what is it?" said Geoffrey, white, trembling, changed as the winter landscape changes when a cloud obscures the sun. He spoke in a dull whisper, clinging to Cuthbert's arm: "Lucy has been so happy since we came to Dale End—it cannot be that she is—dead!"

"Come," said the vicar, and led him in, to where Alicia stood with outstretched hands and tender pitying eyes.

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"LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY."

CHAPTER I. ALL THE PEOPLE STANDING.

WHEN the sun rose over northern England on a certain Sunday early in May—year of grace seventeen hundred and sixty-four—it was exactly four o'clock in the morning. As regards the coast of Northumberland, he sprang with a leap out of a perfectly smooth sea into a perfectly cloudless sky, and if there were, as generally happens, certain fogs, mists, clouds, and vapours lying about the moors and fells among the Cheviots, they were too far from the town of Warkworth for its people to see them. The long cold spring was over at last; the wallflower on the castle wall was in blossom; the pale primroses had not yet all gone; the lilac was preparing to throw out its blossoms; the cuckoo was abroad; the swallows were returning with tumultuous rush, as if they had had quite enough of the sunny south, and longed again for the battlements of the castle and the banks of Coquet; the woods were full of song; the nests were full of young birds, chirping together, partly because they were always hungry, partly because they were rejoicing in the sunshine, and all the living creatures in wood and field and river were hurrying, flying, creeping, crawling, swimming, running, with intent to eat each other out of house and home.

The eye of the sun fell upon empty streets and closed houses—not even a

poacher, much less a thief or burglar, visible in the whole of Northumberland; and if there might be here and there a gipsies' tent, the virtuous toes of the occupants peeped out from beneath the canvas, with never a thought of snaring hares or stealing poultry. Even in Newcastle, which, if you come to think of it, is pretty well for wickedness, the night-watchmen slept in their boxes, lanterns long since extinguished, and the wretches who had no beds, no money, and slender hopes for the next day's food, slept on the bunks and stalls about the market. Nothing stirred except the hands of the church clocks; and these moved steadily; the quarters and the hour were struck. But for the clocks, the towns might have been so many cities of the dead, each house a tomb, each bed a silent grave. The Northumbrian folk began to get up—a little later than usual because it was Sunday—first in the villages and farm-houses, next in the small towns; last and latest, in Newcastle, which was ever a lie-bed city.

Warkworth is quite a small town, and a great way from Newcastle. Therefore the people began to get up and dress about five. There were several reasons which justified them in being so early. Even on Sunday morning pigs and poultry have to be fed, cows to be milked, and horses to be groomed. Then there is the delightful feeling, peculiar to Sunday morning, that

the earlier you get up, the longer you may lean with your shoulder against the door-post. Some men, on Sundays and holy-days, like to lie at full-length upon the grass, and gaze into the depths of the sky, till thirst impels them to rise and seek solace of beer. Some love to turn them in their beds as a door turneth upon its hinges; some delight to sit upon a rail; but the true Northumbrian loveth to stand with his shoulder hitched against a door-post. The attitude is one which brings repose to brain and body.

There is only one street in Warkworth. At one end of it is the church, and at the other end is the Castle. The street runs uphill from church to Castle. In the year seventeen hundred and sixty-four the castle was more ruinous than it showed in later years, because the keep itself stood roofless, its stairs broken, and its floors fallen in—a great shell, echoing thunderously with all the winds. As for the walls, the ruined gateways, the foundations of the chapel, the yawning vaults, and the gutted towers, they have always been the same since the destruction of the place. The wallflowers and long grasses grew upon the broken battlements; blackberries and elder-bushes occupied the moat; the boys climbed up to perilous places by fragments of broken steps; the swallows flew about the lofty keep; the green woods hung upon the slopes above the river, and the winding Coquet rolled around the hill on which the castle stood—a solitary and deserted place. Yet in the evening there was one corner in which the light of a fire could always be seen. It came from a chamber beside the great gateway—that which looks upon the meadows to the south. Here lived the Fugleman. He had fitted a small window in the wall, constructed a door, built up the broken stones, and constituted himself, without asking leave of my Lord of Northumberland, sole tenant of Warkworth Castle.

I think there has always been about the same number of people and houses in Warkworth. If you reflect for a moment you will perceive that this must be so, partly because there is no room for any more on the river-washed peninsula upon which the town is built, and partly because while the same trades are practised for the same portion of country there must be the same number of craftsmen, and no more. You may expect, for instance, in every town, a shop where you can buy all the things which you must have yet

cannot make for yourself, such as sugar, treacle, tape, cotton stuffs, flannel, needles, and thread. In country towns the number of things which can be made at home—and well made too—is more than dwellers where there are shops for everything would understand. In Warkworth, for example, there is a blacksmith—a man of substance, because everybody wants him and would pay him well; there is a carpenter and wheelwright, also a man to be respected, not only for his honourable craft, but also for the fields and meadows which he has bought; a tailor—but he is a starveling, because most people in Northumberland repair, if they do not make, at home; a cobbler, who has two apprentices and keeps both at work, because nobody but a cobbler can get inside a boot, to make or mend it; and a barber, who also has two apprentices. There is no baker, because all the bread is baked at home, which is one, among many reasons, why country life in this eighteenth century is so delightful; there is no brewer, because everybody, down to the cottager, brews his own beer—the old stingo, the humming October, and the small beer for the maids and children. Yet, for the sake of companionship, conversation, song, and the arrangement of matches, there must be an ale-house, with a settle round three sides of the room and another outside; and for the quality there must be an inn. There need be no place for the buying and selling of butter, eggs, milk, or cream, because people who have no cows are fain to go without these luxuries, or else to beg and borrow. There need be no butcher, because the farmers kill and send word to the gentry when beef or mutton may be had. There is no apothecary, because every woman in the parish knows what are the best simples for any complaint and where to find them. There is no bookseller, because nobody at Warkworth ever wanted to read at all, and very few know how; one excepts the Vicar—who may read the Fathers in Greek and Latin—and his Worship Mr. Cuthbert Carnaby, Justice of the Peace, who reads *The Gentleman's Magazine*, to which he once contributed a description of Warkworth. There is, in fact, a singular contempt for literature in the town, and it is, I believe, a remarkable Northumbrian characteristic. There are no undertakers, because in this county people have grown out of the habit of dying, so that except in Newcastle, where people fight and kill each other, the trade can only be

carried on at a loss; and there are no lawyers, because the townsfolk of Warkworth desire to have nothing to do with law, and are only concerned with one of the many laws by which good order is maintained in this realm of England—that, namely, which forbids the landing of Geneva and brandy on the banks of the Coquet without vexatious and tedious ceremonies, including payment of hard money. If you who live in great towns consider the trades, crafts, and mysteries by which men get a living in these latter days, you will presently understand that most of them are unnecessary for the simple life.

When the first comers had looked up the street and down the street, straight through and across each other, and examined the sky and inspected the horizon, and obtained all possible information about the weather, they gave each other the good-morning, and asked for opinions on the subject of hay. Then one by one they went back to their houses—which are of stone, having very small windows with bull's-eye glass in leaden casements, and red-tiled roofs—and presently came out bearing with them their breakfast, such as two or three kned-cakes, or a chunk of three weeks' old bread, or a slice of bread-and-dripping, or bread and fat pork, or a pewter platter of bread and beef even, with a great pewter mug of small ale. They consumed their breakfast side by side in good fellowship, standing on the cobblestones or leaning against the door-posts, taking time over it: first a mouthful and then a drink, then a period of reflection, then a remark, and then another mouthful. They mostly had the Northumbrian face, which I am told is the Norwegian face—an oval shape, with soft blue eyes; with the face goeth a gentle voice and a slow manner of speech. They are a folk born by nature with so deep a love of life that they desire nothing better than to stretch out and prolong the present. Time, who is an inexorable tyrant, will not allow so much as a single moment to be stretched. Yet, by dint of slow motion, slow speech, a steady clinging to old customs, never doing to-day anything different from what you did yesterday and the day before, always talking the same talk at the same times, so that every duty of each season has its formula, wearing the same clothes, eating the same food, sitting in the same place, and avoiding all temptation to change, it is quite astonishing how the

semblance of sameness may be given to time so that the whole of life shall seem, at the end of it, nothing but one delightful moment stretched out and prolonged for threescore years and ten.

After breakfast, for two hours by the clock they fell to stroking of stubbly chins and to wondering when the barber would be ready. This could not be until stroke of nine at least, because he had to comb, dress, and powder first the Vicar's wig for Sunday. Heaven forbid that the Church should be put off with anything short of a wig newly combed and newly curled! And next the wig of his Worship Cuthbert Carnaby, Esquire, Justice of the Peace and second cousin to his lordship the Earl of Northumberland, newly succeeded to the title. When this was done the barber addressed himself to the chins and cheeks of the townsfolk, and this with such dexterity and despatch that before the church-bell began he had them all despatched and turned off. And then their countenances were glorious, and shone in the sun like unto the face of a mirror, and felt as smooth to the enamoured finger as the chin and cheek of a maid. Thus does Art improve and correct Nature. The savage who weareth beard knows not this delight.

It was a day on which something out of the common was to happen; a day on which expectation was on tiptoe; and when at ten o'clock the first stroke of the church-bell began, all the boys with one and the same design turned their steps—slowly at first, and as if the business did not greatly matter, yet should be seen into—towards the church-yard. They were all in Sunday best; their hair smooth, their hands white, their shoes brushed, and their stockings clean; they moved as if drawn by invisible ropes; as if they could not choose but go; and whereas on ordinary Sundays not a lad among them all entered the church till the very last toll of the bell, on this day they made straight for the porch at the first, and this, although they knew that if they once set foot within it, they must pass straight on without lingering, into the church, and so take their seats, and have half an hour longer to wait in silence and good-behaviour, with liability to discipline. For a rod is ever ready in church as well as at home, for the back of him who shows himself void of understanding. The Fugleman, who wielded that rod, was strong of arm; and no boy could call himself fortunate, or boast that he had

escaped the scourge of folly till the service was fairly done.

As regards the girls, who were still in the houses, at the first stroke of the bell, they, too, hastened to put the finishing touch, with a ribbon and a white handkerchief, to the Sunday frock. And then, a good half an hour before the time, which was truly wonderful, they, like the boys, hastened to the church. At the first stroke of the bell, the men, too, proceeded to equip them with the Sunday church-going clothes, which were very nearly the same in all weathers, to wit, every man wore his wide horseman's coat, his long waistcoat with sleeves, his thick woollen stockings, and his shoes, with steel buckles or without, according to their station. Thus attired they turned their faces all to the same point of the compass, and heavily, yet with resolution and set purpose, rolled down the hill into the church-yard.

Out in the fields, and in the fair meadows, and down the riverside, and along the quiet country paths, and among the woods which hang above the winding of the Coquet, the sound of the bell quickened the steps of those who were leisurely making their way to church, so that every man put best foot forward, with a "Hurry up, lad! Lose not this morning's sight! Be in time! Quick, laggard!" and so forth, each to the other; those who were on horseback broke into a trot, and laughed at those who were afoot; the old women cried, alas! for their age, by reason of which limbs are stiff and folks can go no faster than they may, and so they might be too late for the best part of the show; the old men cursed the rheumatism which stiffened their knees, and bent their hips, and took the spring out of feet which would fain be elastic still, wherefore they must perhaps lose the first or opening scene. And the boys and girls who were with them took hands, and instead of walking with the respectful slow step which should mark the Sabbath, broke away from the elders, and raced, with a whoop and a holla, across the grass, a scandal to the mild-eyed kine, who love the day to be hallowed and kept holy.

At Morwick Mill, Mistress Barbara Humble would not go to church, though her brother did. Nor would she let any other of the household go, neither her man nor her maid, nor the stranger, if any, that was within her gates; but at half-past ten of the clock she called them together, and read

aloud the Penitential Psalms and the Communion Service.

The show, meantime, had begun. At the first stroke of the bell there walked forth from the vestry-room a little procession of two. First came a tall spare man of sixty or so, bearing before him a pike. He was himself as straight and erect as the pike he carried; he wore his best suit, very magnificent, for it was his old uniform kept for Sundays and holidays: that of a sergeant in the Fourteenth, or Berkshire, Regiment of Foot, namely, a black three-cornered hat, a scarlet coat, faced with yellow and with yellow cuffs, scarlet waistcoat and breeches, white garters and white cravat. On the hat was in silver the White Horse of his regiment, and the motto "Nec aspera terrent." He walked slowly down the aisle with the precision of a machine, and his face was remarkable, because he was on duty, for having no expression whatever. You cannot draw a face, or in any way present the effigy of a human face which shall say nothing; that is beyond the power of the rudest or the most skilled artist; but some men have acquired this power over their own faces—diplomats or soldiers they are by trade. This man was a soldier. He was so good a soldier, that he had been promoted, first to be corporal, then to be sergeant, and lastly to be Fugleman, whose place was in the front before the whole regiment, and whose duty it was to lead the exercises at the word of command with his pike. In his age and retirement he acted as the executive officer in all matters connected with the ecclesiastical and civic functions of the town, whether to lead the responses, to conduct a baptism, a funeral, or a wedding, to set a man in the stocks and to stand over him, to cane a boy for laughing in church, to put a vagrant in pillory and stand beside him; to tie up an offender to the cart-tail and give him five dozen; or, as in the present case, to wrap a lad in a white sheet, and remain with him while he did public penance for his fault. He was constable, clerk, and guardian of the peace.

The boy who followed him was a tall and lusty youth, past sixteen, who might very well have passed for eighteen; a boy with rosy cheeks, blue eyes, and brown hair; but his eyes were downcast, his cheek was flushed with shame because he was clad from head to foot in a long white sheet, and he was placed so clothed, for the space of half an hour, while the bells rang for

service, in the church porch, and then to stand up before all the congregation to ask pardon of the people, and to repeat the Lord's Prayer aloud in token of repentance.

The porch of Warkworth Church is large and square, fifteen feet across, with a stone bench on either side. The boy was stationed within the porch on the eastern side, and close to the church-door, so that all those who passed in must needs behold him. At his left hand stood the Fugleman, pike grounded and head erect, looking straight before him, and saying nothing except at the beginning, when discipline for a moment gave way to friendship, and he murmured: "Heart up, Master Ralph! What odds is a white sheet!"

Then he became rigid, and neither spake nor moved. As for the penitent, he tried to imitate the rigidity of his companion, but with poor success, for his mouth trembled, and his eyes sank, and his colour came and went as the people, all of whom he knew, passed him with reproachful or pitying gaze. The church and the porch and the church-yard were all eyes; he was himself a gigantic monument of shame.

When the boys walked—as slowly as they possibly could—through the porch, they grinned and nudged each other. But for the stern aspect of the Fugleman they would have laughed aloud and danced with joy. They had, however, to move on and take their places in the church, and those were few indeed who were so privileged as to command a view through the open doors of the porch and its occupants.

When the men of the village ranged themselves as in a small amphitheatre round the porch, the younger ones, in a hoarse whisper said each to his neighbour: "Oho! ha! yah!" After which they remained gazing with mouth agape.

The three interjections are capable of many meanings, and may indicate a great variety of feeling. Here was a lad found out and convicted on the clearest evidence and confession: he had made fools of the whole town; here he was before all, undergoing the sentence pronounced upon him by his Worship, Mr. Carnaby; and a sentence so seldom pronounced as to make it an occasion for wonder; and the offender was not a gipsy or a vagrom man, or one of themselves, but young Ralph Embleton of Morwick Mill; and the offence was not robbing, or pilfering, or cheating, or smuggling, or beating and striking, but quite an unusual and even a romantic kind

of offence, for which there was no name even; and an offence not falling within any law. Therefore their faces were fixed in an immovable gaze, and their mouths remained wide-open—some twenty or thirty mouths in all—like unto fly-traps.

When the girls, for their part, walked through the porch they looked at the offender with eyes of pity, and one or two shed tears, because it seemed dreadful that this tall and handsome lad should be compelled to stand up before all in guise so shameful. Yet he had caused many to tremble in their beds. But the elder women stopped as they passed and wagged their heads with frowns, and said: "Oh, dear, dear! . . . Alack and alas! . . . Tut, tut! . . . Fye for shame! . . . This is the end of wickedness. . . . Ah, hinneys! . . . Oh! oh! . . . Look you now. . . . Heigh, laddie! did a body ever hear the like?" and so forth, with grateful rustle of skirts, and so virtuously into the church. A noble example, indeed, for their own boys. Better one such illustration of the punishment which overtakes offenders than fifty patterns of the peace and tranquility in which the good man begins and ends his days. Yet we humans are so foolish and perverse that we sometimes find vice attractive and the ways of virtue monotonous, and give no heed even to the most dreadful examples.

Towards the close of the ringing there entered the church, walking majestically through the lane formed by the rustics, Mr. Cuthbert Carnaby, Justice of the Peace, with Madam his good lady. He was attired in a full wig and a purple coat with laced ruffles, laced cravat, a flowered silk waistcoat, and gold buckles in his shoes; in his hand he carried a heavy gold-headed stick, and under his arm he bore his laced hat; his ample cheeks were red, and red was his double chin. Though his bearing was full of authority, his eyes were kind, and when he saw the boy standing in the porch he felt inclined to remit the remainder of the punishment.

"So, Ralph," he said, stopping to admonish him, "thy father was a worthy man; he hath not lived to see this. But courage, boy, and do the like no more. Shame attends folly. Thou art young; let this be a lesson. After punishment and repentance cometh forgiveness; so cheer up, my lad."

"Ralph," said his wife, with a smile in her eyes and a frown on her brow, "I could find it in my heart to flog thee

soundly, but thou art punished enough. Ghosts indeed! and not a maid would go past the castle after dark, for fear of this boy! Let us hear no more about ghosts."

She shook her finger—they both shook their fingers—she adjusted her hoop, and entered the church. The boy's heart felt lighter; Mr. Carnaby and Madam would forgive him. His Worship went on, bearing before him his gold-headed stick, and walked up the aisle to his pew, a large room within the chancel, provided with chairs and cushions, curtains to keep off the draught, and a fire-place for winter.

After Mr. Carnaby there walked into the porch a man dressed in good broadcloth with white stockings, and shoes with silver buckles. And his coat had silver buttons, which marked him for a man of substance. His cheeks were full and his face fiery, as if he was one who, although young, lived well, and his eyes were small and too close together, which made him look like a pig. It was Mathew Humble, Ralph's cousin and guardian.

At sight of him the boy's face flushed and his lips parted; but he restrained himself and said nothing, while the Fugleman gave him an admonitory nudge with his elbow.

The man looked at Ralph from top to toe, as if examining into the arrangements and anxious to see that all was properly and scientifically carried out.

"Ta-ta-ta!" he said with an air of dissatisfaction. "What is this? Call you this penance? Where is the candle? Did his Worship say nothing about the candle?"

"Nothing," replied the Fugleman with shortness.

"He ought to have carried a candle. Dear me! this is irregular. This spoils all. But—Ah!—bareheaded"—he stood as far back as the breadth of the porch would allow, so as to get the full effect and to observe the picture from the best point of view—"in a long white sheet! Ah! bare-headed and in a long white sheet! Oh, what a disgraceful day! These are things, Fugleman, which end in the gallows. For an Embleton, too! If the old man can see it what will he think of the boy to whom he left the mill? And to beg pardon"—he smacked his lips with satisfaction—"to beg pardon of the people! Ah, and to repeat the Lord's Prayer in the church—the Lord's Prayer—in the church aloud! The Lord's Prayer—in the church—aloud—before all the people! Ah! Dear me—dear me!"

He wagged his head, as if he could not tear himself away from the spectacle of so much degradation. Then he added with a smile of perfect satisfaction a detail which he had forgotten:

"Standing, too! The Lord's Prayer—in the church—aloud—before all the people—standing! This is a pretty beginning, Fugleman, for sixteen years."

If the Lord's Prayer in itself were something to be ashamed of he could not have spoken with greater contempt. The boy, however, looking straight up into the roof of the porch, made no answer nor seemed to hear.

The speaker held up both hands, shook his head, sighed, and slowly withdrew into the church.

Then there came down the street an old lady in a white cap, a white apron, a shawl, and black mittens, an old lady with a face lined all over, with kind soft eyes and white hair, but her face was troubled. Beside her walked a girl of twelve or thereabouts, dressed in white frock and straw hat trimmed with white ribbon, and white cotton mittens, and she was crying and sobbing.

"Thou mayest stand up in the church," said the old lady, "when he repeats the Lord's Prayer, but not beside him in the porch."

"But I helped him," she cried. "Oh, I am as bad as he! I am worse, because I laughed at him and encouraged him."

"But thou hast not been sentenced," said the old lady. "It is thy punishment, child—and a heavy one—to feel that Ralph bears thy shame and his own too."

"I was on one side of the hedge when Dame Ridley dropped her basket," the child went on, crying more bitterly. "I was on one side and he was on the other. Oh! oh! oh! She said there were two ghosts—I was one."

When they reached the porch the girl, at sight of the boy in the sheet, ran and threw her arms about his neck and kissed him, and cried loud enough for all within to hear:

"Oh, Ralph, Ralph, it is wicked of them!"

These words were heard all over the church, and Mathew Humble sprang to his feet, as if demanding that the speaker should be carried off to instant execution for contempt of court. All eyes were turned upon his Worship's pew, and I know not what would have happened, because his periwig was seen to be agitated and

the gold head of his stick appeared above the pew; but luckily just then the bells clashed all together, frightening the swallows about the tower so that they flew straight to the castle and stayed there, and the Vicar came out of the vestry and sat down in the reading-desk, and, as was his custom, surveyed his church and congregation for a few minutes before the service began.

It is an old church of Norman work in parts, patched up and rebuilt from time to time by the Percies, but there are no monuments of them. The Vicar's eyes fell upon a plain whitewashed building, provided with rows of ancient and worm-eaten benches, worn black by many generations of worshippers. The choir and the music sat at the west end. In front of the chancel was a square space in which was set a long stool. While the Vicar waited the Fugleman marched up the aisle, followed by the boy in the sheet, and both sat on this stool of repentance. Then the Vicar rose—he was a benignant old man, with white hair—and began to read in a full and musical voice how sinners may repent and find forgiveness. But the people thought he meant his words to apply this morning especially and only to the boy in the sheet. This made them feel surprisingly virtuous and inclined to sing praises with a glad heart. So, too, with the lessons, one of which dealt with the fate of a wicked king. All the people looked at the boy in the sheet, and felt that, under another name, it was his own story told beforehand, prophetically; and when they stood up to sing in thanksgiving, their gratitude took the form of being glad that they were not upon the stool. When the Psalms were read the people paid unusual attention, letting the boy have the benefit of all the penitential utterances, but taking the joyous verses to themselves. And the Litany they regarded as composed, as well as read, exclusively for this convicted sinner. Among the elder ladies there was hope that the offended ghosts might—some at least—be present in the church and see this humiliation, which would not fail to dispose their ghostlinesses to a benevolent attitude, and even influence the weather.

It seemed to the boy as if that service never would end. To the congregation it seemed, on account of this unusual episode, as if there never had been a service so short and so exciting.

When the Commandments had been recited, Ralph almost expected to hear an

additional one, "Thou shalt not pretend to be a ghost," and to be called on to pray, all by himself, for an inclination of the heart to keep that injunction. But the Vicar threw away the opportunity and ended as usual with the tenth commandment.

He gave out the psalm, and retired to put on his black gown. The music—consisting of a violin, a violoncello, and a clarionet—struck up the tune, and the choir, among whom Ralph ought to have been, hummed and cleared their voices. The Northumbrians, as is well known, have good voices and good ears. The tune was "Warwick," and the psalm was that which began:

Lord, in the morning thou shalt hear
My voice ascend to thee.

The boy trembled because the words seemed to refer to the part he was about to play. His own voice would, immediately, be ascending high, but all by itself. He saw the face of his cousin, Mathew Humble, fixed upon him with ill-concealed and malignant joy. Why did Mathew hate him with such a bitter hatred? Also he saw the face of the girl who had been his partner; her eyes were full of tears; and at sight of her grief his own eyes became humid.

He did not take any part at all in the hymn.

When it was finished, the Vicar stood in his pulpit waiting; his Worship stood up in his pew, his face turned towards the culprit; in his hand his great gold-headed cane. All the people stared at the culprit with curious eyes, as boys stare at one of their companions when he is about to be flogged. Just then the girl left her seat and stepped deliberately up the aisle, and stood beside the boy in the sheet. And the congregation murmured wonder.

The Fugleman touched the boy's shoulder and brought his pike to 'tention.

"Say after me," he said aloud. Then to the congregation he added: "And all the people standing."

"I confess my fault," he began.

"I confess my fault," repeated boy and girl together.

"And am heartily sorry, and do beg forgiveness."

And then the Lord's Prayer.

The boy spoke out the words clearly and boldly, and with his was heard the girl's voice as well, but both were nearly drowned by the loud voice of the Fugleman.

It was over then. All sat down; the

girl beside Ralph on the stool of repentance, and the sermon began.

The sermon which the Vicar read had nothing to do with the penance just performed; it was a learned discourse, which would be afterwards published, showing the Divine origin of the Hierarchy; it was stuffed full of references to the Fathers, and conviction was conveyed to his hearers' hearts (in case the argument was difficult to follow) by quotations of Greek in the original. His Worship fell fast asleep; all the men in the church followed his example; the boys pinched and kicked each other, safe from the Fugleman for once; the women and the girls alone kept their eyes open, because they had on their best things, and with fine clothes go good manners, and the feminine sex loveth above all things to feel well dressed and therefore compelled to be well behaved. Even the Fugleman allowed his eyelids to drop, but never relinquished his pike; and the girl, holding Ralph fast by the hand, wondered if they would ever, as long as they lived, these two, recover from the dreadful disgrace of that morning.

When the Vicar had drubbed the pulpit to the very end of his manuscript, and the service was over, the three stood up again and remained standing till the people were all gone.

"Come, lass," said the Fugleman when the church was empty, "we can all go now. Off with that rag, Master Ralph."

He unbent; his face assumed a human expression; he laid down the pike.

"What odds, I say, is a white sheet? Why, think 'twas a show for the lads which they haven't had for many a year. And May nigh gone already, and never a man in the stocks yet, and the pillory rotting for want of custom, and never a thief flogged, nor a bear-baiting. If it 'twasn't for the cocks of a Sunday afternoon and the wrestling, there would have been nothing for the poor fellows but your ghosts to keep 'em out of mischief. And, lad," he pointed in the direction of the mill, "your cousin means more mischief. It was him that laid information before his Worship."

"Oh!" said Ralph, clenching his fists.

"Aye, him it was, and his Worship thought it mean, but he was bound to take notice, for why, says his Worship, 'he can't let this boy frighten all the maids out of their silly senses. Yet, for his own cousin and his guardian——' that's what his Worship said."

"Oh!" Again Ralph clenched his fists.

"Should I, an old soldier, preach mutiny? Never. But seeing that your cousin is no rightful officer of yourn, nor yet commissioned to carry pike in your company, why, I, for one——"

"What, Fugleman?"

"I, for one, if I was a well-grown boy, nigh upon seventeen, the next time he gave orders for another six dozen, or even three dozen, I would ask him if he was strong enough to tie up a mutineer."

The boy nodded his head.

"Cousin thof he be," continued the Fugleman, "captain or lieutenant is he not."

The boy had by this time divested himself of his sheet, and stood dressed in a long brown coat and plainly-cut waistcoat; he, too, wore silver buckles to his shoes, like his cousin, but not silver buttons; his hair was tied with a black ribbon, and his hat was plain, without lace or ornament.

When his adviser had finished, he walked slowly down the empty church, hand-in-hand with the girl.

In the porch he stopped, threw his arm round her neck, and kissed her twice.

"No one but you, Drusy," he said, "would have done it. I'll never forget it, never, as long as I live. Go home to Granny, my dear, and have your dinner."

"And you will go home, too, Ralph?"

"Yes, I am going home. I've got to have a talk with Mathew Humble."

Left alone in the church, the Fugleman sat down irreverently on the steps of the pulpit, and laughed aloud.

"Mathew Humble," he said, "is going to be astonished."

CHAPTER II. THE ASTONISHMENT OF MATHEW HUMBLE.

By this time the people had dispersed quadrivious—that is to say, north, south, east, and west; and were making their way homewards, their appetites for dinner keener than usual. Penance, considered as a Sunday show, hath no fellow; it is even superior to the stocks, which is a week-day show. You may not pelt a man in a white sheet with rotten eggs, it is true; but the same objection applies to the stocks. Of course, it cannot compare with a good pillory, which is rare, especially when eggs are plentiful and rotten apples lying under every tree; or with a really heartfelt whipping of a vagabond or gipsy at the cart-tail, which is, unfortunately, rarer still. Among simple people there

is a feeling that the greater the pain endured by the subject, the greater is the pleasure of the onlooker. Just in the same way did the Roman ladies discuss among themselves before the play whether it was more desirable to see Hercules—represented by the young Herr Hermann newly arrived from the Rhine—burning to death in a shirt of pitch; or Scævola—done to the life by that gallant captive, Owen ap Rice, from Britain—thrusting his bare arm into a clear fire and keeping it there till the hand was burnt off; or Actæon—played with spirit by Joseph Ben Eleazar, the swift-footed Syrian—pursued and torn to pieces by the hounds of Dian.

Ralph walked quickly past some of these groups, who fell back to right and left, and looked at him curiously. On ordinary Sundays he would have a pleasant word with all, a kiss for the children, and a challenge for the boys. To-day he passed them without a word, with head erect, eyes flashing, and clenched fist. He was not thinking of salutations; he was thinking what he should do: how he should begin his mutiny: what would be the issue of the fight. Whatever the result, there would be joy in bringing, if only for once, hand, fist, or stick into contact with the face or figure of his cousin. It was he, was it, who informed against him to his Worship? It was no other than his cousin who had compassed this most disagreeable of mornings. And now, doubtless, he waited, with a great cane, his arrival at home, in order to administer another of those "corrections" of which he was so fond. Hitherto, Ralph had submitted quietly; but he had been growing; he was within a month of seventeen; was it to be endured that he should be beaten and flogged like a child of ten, because his cousin hated him?

The girls, as he strode past them regardless, looked at him with great pity, because they knew—everybody knew—what awaited him. And Mathew Humble such a hard man! Poor lad! Yet those who mock spirits and fairies never fail to have cause for repentance in the long run; and punishment had fallen swiftly upon Ralph. Perhaps, after this, he would respect the things which belong to the other world.

Heavens! one might as well sit among the ruins of Dunstanburgh after dark and pretend to be the Seeker; or within the chapel of Dilston at midnight and pretend to be Lady Derwentwater's troubled spirit;

and then hope to escape scot-free. Yet, poor lad! and Mathew so hard a man!

What Ralph said to himself—justifying rebellion, because he was a conscientious lad—was this: "His Worship said that the penance would be enough; who was Mathew, then, to override the decision of the court?" Also, he was past the age of flogging, being now able to hold his own against most—whether at quarterstaff, single-stick, or wrestling—young men older than himself; lastly, since Mathew had played this trick, he wanted revenge. But Mathew was his guardian; very well, then let him learn— But here he broke down, because he could not, for the moment, think of any lesson which his own rebellion would be likely to teach his cousin.

When Ralph left the fields and turned into the lane leading down to the river, he began to look about among the trees and underwood as if searching for something. Presently he espied a long pliant alder-branch in its second year of growth which seemed promising. He cut it to a length of about three feet, trimmed off leaves and twigs, and balanced it critically with a tentative flourish or two in the air.

"As thick as my thumb," he said, "and as heavy as his cane. Blow for blow, Cousin Mathew. This will curl round his shoulders and leave its mark upon his legs."

Morwick Mill stands upon the River Coquet, about two miles from Warkworth. You can easily get to it by following the banks of the river, which is perhaps the best way, though sometimes you must off shoes and stockings and wade across knee-deep to the other side.

The mill consists of a square house upon the edge of the river, with a great wheel on one side; and almost all the water of the river is here diverted so as to form a sufficient power for the mill-wheel. At the back of the mill, which is also a substantial dwelling-house, is a great careless garden with pigsties and linneys for cattle, and vegetables and fruit-trees; and at the side are two or three cottages, where live the people employed at the mill. All the fields which lie sloping up from the river-side belong, as well, to the owner of the mill. The owner at this moment was no other than the scapegrace Ralph; and his cousin, Mathew Humble, was his guardian, who had nothing at all in the world of his own but a little farm of thirty acres. The thought of this great inheritance, compared with his own meagre holding, filled the

good guardian's heart with bitterness, and his arm, when it came to correction, with a superhuman strength. He would be guardian for four years more; then he would have to give a strict account of his guardianship; and the burden of this obligation, though he had only held the post for two years, filled him with such wrath and anxiety that he was fain, when he did think upon it, which was often, to pull the cork out of a certain stone jar and allay his anxieties with a dram of strong waters. He was very anxious, because already the accounts were confused; the stone jar was always handy; therefore, he had become swollen about the neck and coarse of nose, which was a full and prominent feature, and flabby, as well as fiery, about the cheeks. In these times of much drinking many men become pendulous of cheek and ruddy of nose at forty or so, but few at six-and-twenty. Mathew was not, at this time, much more than six-and-twenty; say ten years older than Ralph.

The kitchen, dining-room, and sitting-room of Morwick Mill was a large low room, with one long window. At the sides of the room, and between the great joists, were hanging sides of bacon and hams, besides pewter-pots and pewter-dishes, brightly polished wooden platters, china cups, brass vessels, whips, bridles, a loaded blunderbuss, cudgels, strings of onions, dried herbs of every kind, and all the thousand things wanted for the conduct of a household. At one end was a noble fire of logs burning in an ample chimney, and before the fire a great piece of beef roasting, and now, to outward scrutiny and the sense of smell, ready to be dished. A middle-aged woman, full, comely, and good-natured of aspect, was engaged in preparation for that critical operation. This was Prudence, who had lived at the mill all her life.

She looked up as Ralph appeared in the doorway, and shook her head, but more in pity than in reproach. And she looked sideways, by way of friendly warning, in the direction of the table, at which sat another woman of different appearance. She was, perhaps, five or six and thirty, with thin features and sour expression, not improved by a cast in her eye. This was Barbara, sister of Mathew Humble, and now acting in the capacity of mistress of Morwick Mill, for her brother was not married. She had open before her the Bible, and she had found a most beautiful collection of texts appropriate to the

case of Fools in the Book of Proverbs. The table was laid for dinner, with pewter plates and black-handled knives and steel forks. The beer had been drawn, and stood in a great brown jug, foaming with a venerably silver head. Ralph observed without astonishment that the plate set for him contained a piece of dry bread, ostentatiously displayed. It was to be his dinner.

This pleasing maiden, Barbara, who regarded the boy with an affection almost as great as her brother's, that is to say, with a malignity quite uncommon, first pointed with her lean and skinny forefinger to the page before her, and read aloud, shaking her head reproachfully:

"As a man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am I not in sport?"

Solomon must surely have had Ralph in his mind.

Then she pointed with the same finger to a door opposite, and said, a smile of satisfaction stealing over her countenance:

"Go to your guardian. Go to receive the wages of sin."

"Those," said Ralph with a light laugh, feeling confidence in his alder-branch, "are not a flogging, on this occasion, but a fight."

Before she heard his words, or had begun to ask herself what they might mean, because she was so full of satisfaction with her texts, he had flung his hat upon a chair, and gone to the next room. If Barbara had been observant, she might have remarked, besides these extraordinary words, a certain brightness of the eyes and setting of the mouth which betokened the spirit of resistance.

The inner room was one occupied and used by Mathew alone. It contained all the papers, account-books, and documents connected with the property and business of the mill. Here, too, was the stone jar already referred to. The decks had been, so to speak, cleared for action, that is to say, the table was thrust into the corner, and upon it lay the sacred instrument with which Mathew loved to correct his ward. This promoter of virtue, or dispenser of consequences, was a strong and supple cane, than which few instruments are more highly gifted with the power of inflicting torture. Ralph knew it well, and had experienced on many occasions the full force of this wholesome quality. He saw it lying ready for use, and he reflected cheerfully that

the alder-branch partly up his left sleeve and partly in his coat-pocket would be more supple, equally heavy, and perhaps more efficacious regarded simply as a pain producer.

When the boy appeared, Mathew rose and removed his wig and coat, because the work before him was likely to make him warm. He then assumed the rod, and ordered Ralph to take off his coat and waistcoat.

"This day," he said, "you have disgraced your family. I design that you shall have such a flogging as you will not readily forget." He then remembered that he would be more free for action without his waistcoat. A man can throw more heart into his work. "Such a flogging," he repeated as he removed it, "as you will remember all your life."

"Well, cousin," said Ralph, "Mr. Carnaby said that the penance was the punishment. I have done the penance."

"Silence, sir! Do you dare to argue with your guardian?" He now began to roll up his shirt-sleeves so as to have his arms quite bare, which is an additional advantage when one wants to put out all one's strength. "I shall flog the flesh off your bones, you young villain!"

But he paused, and for a moment his jaws stuck, and he was speechless, for his cousin, instead of meekly placing himself in position to receive the stupendous flogging intended for him, was facing him, resolution in his eyes, and a weapon in his hands.

"Flogging for flogging, Cousin Mathew," said Ralph; "flesh for flesh. Strip my bones, I strip yours."

Mathew now observed for the first time—it was a most unfortunate moment for making the discovery—that Ralph was a good two inches taller than himself, that his arm was as stout, and that his weapon was of a thickness, length, and pliability which might make the stoutest quail; also he remarked that his shoulders were surprisingly broad, and his legs of length and size quite out of the common. And it even occurred to him that he might have to endure hardness.

"Flesh for flesh," said Ralph, poisoning the alder-branch.

"Villain! Would you break the Fifth Commandment?"

Ralph shook his weapon, making it sing merrily and even thirstily through the air, but made no reply.

"Lay down the switch."

Ralph raised it above his head as one who is preparing to strike.

"Down on your knees, viper, and beg for pardon."

"Flesh for flesh, Mathew," said Ralph.

"You will have it then, young devil. I will kill you!"

Mathew rushed upon his cousin, raining blows as thick as hail upon him. For the moment his weight told and the boy was beaten back. Swish. "Viper!" Swish—swish—'twas a terrible cane. "I will teach you to rebel." Swish—swish—'twas a cane of a suppleness beyond nature. "I will give you a lesson." Swish—swish. "I will break every bone in your body." Swish—the end of the cane found out every soft place—there were not many—upon Ralph's body.

But then the tables were turned, for the boy, recovering from the first confusion, leaped suddenly aside, and with a dexterous movement of the left foot caused his cousin to stumble and fall heavily. He struggled, struck, kicked, and lashed out—but he did not get up again. A very important element in the fight was strangely overlooked by Mathew before he began the attack. It was this, that whereas he was himself out of condition, the boy was in splendid fettle, sound of wind as well as limb. So furious was Mathew's first assault that, brief as was its duration, no sooner was he tripped up than he perceived that his wind was gone, and though he could kick and struggle, yet if he half got up he was quickly knocked down again. And while he kicked and struggled, this young viper, this monster of ingratitude was administering such a punishment as even he, Mathew, had never contemplated for Ralph.

"Have you had enough?" cried the boy at last, out of breath.

"I will murder you, I will— Oh, Lord!" For the punishment began again.

"Stripping of flesh," said Ralph. "This you will remember, cousin, all your life."

The alder-branch was like a flail in the lad's strong arm. The rapidity, the precision, the delicate perception of tender places, took away the sufferer's breath. There was no sound place left in the whole of Mathew's body.

"Have you had enough?" cried Ralph.

"I will flay you alive for this—I will. Oh, oh! I have had enough."

"Then," said Ralph, with one final effort, the effect of which would be, by itself, felt for a week and more, "get up."

Mathew rose, groaning.

"We have had the last of punishments," said the boy. "I will fight you any day you please, but I will take no more punishments from you." He threw down his stick, and put on his coat and waistcoat, with some tenderness however, for the first part of the battle had left its marks.

Now outside, the two women were listening, one with complacency, and the other with pity. And the first was ready with the Bible still open at the Book of Proverbs, which contains quite an armoury of texts good to hurl at a young transgressor. The second, with one ear turned to the door of Mathew's room, went on dishing the beef, which she presently placed upon the table.

There was unusual delay in the sound which generally followed Ralph's visits to that room. No doubt Mathew was commencing with a short Commination Service. Presently, however, there was a great trampling of feet, with the swish, swish of the cane—Mathew's first charge.

"Lord ha' mercy!" cried Prudence.

"The rod and reproof give wisdom," read her mistress from the Book.

Then they heard a heavy fall, followed by a heavier, faster, more determined swishing, hissing, and whistling of the instrument, till the air was resonant with its music, and it was as if all the boys in Northumberland were being caned at once.

"Lord ha' mercy!" repeated Prudence. "He'll murder the boy."

"A reproof," read the other from her place, "'entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool.'"

There was a pause, and then a sound of voices, and then another terrific hailstorm of blows.

Both women looked aghast. Was the punishment never to end?

Then Prudence rushed to the door.

"Mistress," she cried, "you may look on while the boy is cut to pieces—I can't and won't."

She opened the door. Heavens! what a sight was that which met her astonished eyes. The boy, cut and bruised about the face, was standing in the middle of the room, smiling. The man was on his hands and knees, slowly rising; his shirt was torn off his back; his shoulders were cut to pieces; he was covered with weals and bruises; his face, scarred and seamed with Ralph's cruel alder-branch, was dreadful to look upon. He seemed to see nothing; he groaned as he lifted himself up; he staggered where he stood.

Presently he put on his coat with many groans and muttered curses, and Prudence observed that all the while he regarded the lad with looks of the most extreme terror and rage. Presently she began to understand the situation.

"Are you hurt, Master Ralph?" she asked.

"No; but Mathew is," said Ralph.

"Mathew," cried his sister, as the victim of rebellion staggered into the room, "what is this?"

He sank into his armchair with a long deep groan, and made no reply.

"Why, what in the world, Master Ralph?" asked the servant.

But the lad had gone. He went upstairs to his own room; made up a little bundle of things which he wrapped in a handkerchief, picked out the thickest and heaviest of his cudgels, and then returned to the kitchen.

"Give me my dinner," he said.

Barbara had brought out her brother's wig and put it on now, but he still sat silent and motionless. He was in such an agony of pain all over, and his nervous system had sustained so terrible a shock that he could not speak.

"Give me my dinner," Ralph repeated.

Barbara pointed to the crust of bread. She was appalled by this mutiny, but she preserved some presence of mind, and she remembered the bread. Then she sat down again before the Bible and began to read, like a clergyman while the plate goes round.

"It is as sport to the Fool to do mischief."

Prudence, the beef being already served, laid a knife and fork for each.

"A Fool's mouth," Barbara said, as if she was quoting Solomon, "'calleth for roasted beef and a stalled ox. Bread and water until submission and repentance.'"

The young mutineer made no verbal reply. But he dragged the dish before his own plate, and began to carve for himself, largely and generously.

"Mathew!" cried Barbara, springing to her feet.

"Let be—let be," said Mathew; "let the young devil alone. I will be even with him somehow. Let be."

"Not the old way, cousin," replied Ralph with a nod. He then helped himself to about a pint or so of the good old October, and began, his appetite sharpened by exercise, to make the beef disappear in large quantities. Mathew looked on, saying nothing.

The silence terrified his sister. What did it mean? And she perceived, for the first time, that their ward had ceased to be a boy and must henceforth be treated as a man. It was a fearful thought. She shut her Bible and sat back with folded hands, waiting the issue.

In course of time even a hungry boy of seventeen has had enough. Ralph lifted his head at last, took another prolonged pull at the beer, and told Barbara, politely, that he had enjoyed a good dinner.

Then he turned to his cousin and addressed him with a certain solemnity.

"Cousin," he said, "you have always hated me, because my uncle left the mill to me instead of to yourself. Yet you knew from the beginning that his design was for me to have it. I have done you no wrong. You have never lost any opportunity of abusing me before my face and behind my back. You became, unhappily for me, my guardian. You have never neglected any chance of flogging and beating me, if you could find a cause. As regards the ghost business, I was wrong. I deserved punishment, but was it the province of a cousin and a guardian to go and lay information before the Justice of the Peace? I shall be seventeen come next month. In four years this mill and the farm will be my own. But if I remain with you here I can expect nothing but hatred and ill-treatment as far as you dare. You have given me ploughboy's work without a ploughboy's wage, and often without a ploughboy's food. As for flogging, that is finished, because I think you have no more stomach for another fight."

Mathew made no reply whatever, but sat with his head upon his hands, breathing heavily.

"I am tired of ill-treatment," Ralph went on, "and I shall go away."

"Whither, boy?" asked Barbara.

"I know not yet. I go to seek my fortune."

"Go, if you will," said Mathew; "go, in the devil's name; go, whither you are bound to go: long before four years are over you will be hanging in chains."

Ralph laughed and took up his bundle.

"Farewell, Prudence," he said, "thou wast ever kind to me."

The woman threw her arms about his neck and kissed him with tears, and prayed that the Lord might bless him. And as he walked forth from the house the voice of Barbara followed him, saying:

"'A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the Fool's back.'"

The Fugleman was sitting in the sun before his door in the castle, smoking a pipe and inclined to be drowsy, when Ralph appeared with his startling news.

As regards the flogging, the old soldier made light of it. Nothing can be done in the army without the cat. Had not he himself once received three hundred all by a mistake, because they were meant for another man, who escaped. Did he therefore bear malice against his commanding officer? No. But the villainy of Mathew, first to lay information and then to make an excuse for a flogging just for pleasure, and to gratify his own selfish desire to be continually flogging, why, that justified the mutiny. As for the details of the fight, he blamed severely the inexperience in strategy shown by first knocking down the enemy. He should have expected better things of Ralph, whose true policy would have been to harass and annoy his adversary by feints, dodges, and unexpected skirmishes. This would not only have fatigued him, but, considering his shortness of breath, would have worn him out so that he would in the end have fallen an easy prey, and been cudgelled without resistance till there was not a sound place left. Besides, it would have made the fight more interesting, considered as a work of art.

However, doubtless the next time—but then he remembered that the boy was going away.

"To seek my fortune, Fugleman," Ralph said gaily. "Look after Drusy for me, while I am away."

"Aye—aye," the Fugleman replied, "she shall come to no harm. And as for money, Master Ralph?"

"I've got a guinea," he replied, "which my uncle gave me three years ago."

"A guinea won't go far. Stay, Master Ralph." He went into his room and came back with a stocking in his hand. "Here's all I've got, boy. It is twenty guineas. Take it all. I shall do very well. Lord! what with the rabbits and the pheasants—"

"Nay," said Ralph, "I will not take your savings neither."

But, presently, being pressed, he consented to take ten guineas on the understanding that when he came back (his fortune made) the Fugleman was to receive twenty. And then they parted with a mighty hand-shake.

Half-way down the street Ralph passed Sailor Nan, who was sitting on a great stone beside her door, smoking her short black pipe.

"Whither bound, my lad?" she asked.

"I am bound to London," he replied.

"I am off to seek my fortune."

"Come here, I will read thy fortune."

Like most old women, Nan could read a lad's fortune in the lines of his hand, or by the cards, or by the peeling of an apple.

"A good cruise," she said, "with fair wind aft and good weather for the most part. But storms belike on leaving port. There's a villain, and fighting, and foreign parts, and gold, and a good wife. Go thy ways, lad. Art no poor puss-faced swab to fear fair fighting. Go thy ways. Take and give. Trust not too many. And stand by all old shipmets. Go thy ways."

He laughed and left her. Yet he was cheered by her kindly prophecy.

He crossed the old bridge and presently found himself outside the green palings of Dame Hetherington's house. The girl who had joined him in church was in the garden. He whistled and she came running.

"I am come to say good-bye, Drusy," he said; "I am running away."

"Oh, Ralph, whither? And you have a cruel blow upon your face."

"I have fought Mathew," he said, "and I have beaten him. This scar upon my face is nothing compared with the scars over his. I believe he is one large bruise. But I can no longer endure his ill-treatment and Barbara's continual reproaches. Therefore I am resolved to remain no longer, but shall go to London, there to seek my fortune as thy father did, Drusy."

They talked for half an hour, she trying to persuade him to stay, and he resolved to go. Then he went with her into the house, where he must needs tell all the story to Dame Hetherington, who scolded him, and bade him get home again and make submission, but he would not.

Then Drusilla remembered that her father would gladly aid any lad from Northumberland, and sat down and wrote a letter very quickly, being dexterous with her pen, and gave it to Ralph to carry.

"You will find him," she said, "at the sign of the Leg and Star in Cheapside. Forget not that address. Stay, I will write it outside the letter. Give it him with my respect and obedience. Oh, Ralph, shall you be long before you have found your fortune and are back to us?"

"Nay," said Ralph, "I know not what may be my fortune. I go to find it, like many a lad of old."

Then after many fond farewells Ralph kissed her and trudged away manfully, while Drusy leaned her head over the garden-gate and wept and sobbed, and could not be consoled.

CHAPTER III. HOW RALPH SOUGHT FORTUNE.

A YOUNG man's walk from Warkworth all the way to London cannot fail to be full of interest and adventure. There is, however, no space here to tell of the many adventures which befell this lad upon his journey. As for bad roads, he might have expected them, except that he was young and ignorant and expected nothing, so that each moment brought him some surprise, and each day taught him some new experience. As for the people to be met upon the roads, probably, had he known what to expect, he would have stopped short and sought fortune at Newcastle, Durham, or York, rather than have pressed on to London. But he was brave and full of hope. As to the roadside inns and the bedroom companions, he was astonished afterwards that he managed to get through all without having his weasand cut for the sake of his scanty stock of guineas, so desperate were some of the villains whom he encountered. Nevertheless, even among the most desperate of rogues, there is hesitation about murder, and even about robbing lads and persons of tender years.

He stowed away his money within his waistcoat, keeping in his pocket nothing but two or three shillings for the daily wants; yet it seemed as if every man that he met had sinister designs upon him. If it was a solitary gipsy lying on the grass by the wayside, he rose to meet the boy as he went by, and looked highway robbery with resolution, yet refrained when he met equal resolution in the eyes of the wayfarer, and a stout stick in strong hands, and broad shoulders. If it was a pair of soldiers on the way to join their regiment, they stopped him, being two brave and gallant dare-devil heroes, and recommended the turning out of pockets, or else—— They swore terribly, these brave fellows, but a back-hander right and left with the cudgel, and then a light pair of heels, relieved the wayfarer of this danger, and left the heroes swearing more terribly than before, and lamenting the waste of good front teeth.

When he got near Durham he fell upon a party of pitmen out of work, and therefore parading the road, which is the manner of pitmen, one knows not what for except for mischief. These gentlemen of the underground, who have neither religion nor education, and are, in fact, more savage and heartless than North-American savages, began to set upon the boy out of pure sport, as if they felt that somebody must be damaged in order to keep up their own spirits. They handled him roughly, not for the sake of robbing him, but because he was young and unprotected, just as on Sundays they throw at cocks; and it would have gone badly with him but for one among them who seemed to be a leader, and with many frightful imprecations bade his fellows let the boy alone. So they went on their godless way and he went his, not much the worse for a roll in the dust.

As for the mounted highwaymen, they passed him or met him, riding in splendour, and scorned to fly at such small game as a country boy walking along the road. Substantial farmers riding home from market and tradesmen with money in their pockets were their prey. But Ralph met them in the evenings at the country inns, where they hardly pretended to disguise their profession, and bragged and swaggered among the admiring rustics over their punch, as if there were no such things as gallows and rope.

Worse than the highwayman was the common foot-pad, the cowardly and sneaking villain who would rob a little child of a sixpence—aye, and murder it afterwards to prevent discovery, and feel no remorse. When these road vagabonds accosted the boy it was with intent to rob him, even of the coat upon his back; whereupon he either fought or else ran away. He fought so bravely with so stout a heart and so handy a cudgel, and he ran so fast, that he came to no harm; more than that, he left behind him on the road half-a-score desperadoes at least, who bore upon their gloomy countenances for life the marks of his cudgel, and swore to have his blood whenever they might meet with him again.

The road was not, however, a long field of battle for the lad, like his Progress to Christian the Pilgrim, nor did he meet with Apollyon anywhere. There were waggoners to talk with, friendly hawkers, whom the people call muggers, and faws, or tinkers, who are too often robbers and

pilferers; also farmers, their wives and daughters, cattle-drovers, carriers, honest sailors, who would scorn to rob upon the highway, on their way to join ship, and pleasant little country towns every eight or ten miles, where one could rest and talk, and drink a tankard of cool small beer. Then, as it was early summer, when there are fairs going on in many places, the roads in some parts were full of the caravans and the show-people, whom Ralph found not only a curious and interesting folk, but also friendly, and inclined to conversation with a stranger who was not a rival; who was ready to offer a tankard; who admired without stint or envy the precious things they had to show, and who watched with delight unbounded and belief profound, the curious tricks, arts, artifices, and accomplishments by which they secured a precarious livelihood. In this way Ralph was so fortunate as to make personal acquaintance with the Pig-faced Lady, the Two-headed Calf, the Bons Potamos or Amphibious Beef (stuffed, but a most prodigious monster), and the Italian who played the pipe with his hands, the cymbals with his elbow, the triangle with his knees, and the bells with his head, while he made a most ingenious set of fantoccini dance with his right foot. All this the wonderful Italian would do, and he was not proud. Then there was the accomplished Posture Master, who had no joints at all in any of his limbs, but only flexible hinges turning every way, and could put arms, legs, head, fingers, and toes in any position he pleased. He had a monkey who had been taught to imitate him, but with stiffness. Ralph also was presented to an Albino or Nyctalope, a most illustrious lady, with hair a silvery white, and skin of incomparable clearness, but uncertain of temper; there were the wrestlers, boxers, and quarter-staff players, honest fellows and staunch drinkers, who went round from fair to fair to display their skill, fight with each other like Roman gladiators, and pick up the prizes; there were the conjurors and magicians, who palmed things wherever they pleased as if they were helped by a devil or two; the seventh son, who read the future for all comers, and whose boast was that he was never wrong; the bear-leaders and badger-baiters; the flyer through the air, who made nothing of descending from a steeple-top on a rope with fireworks on his hands and feet; the dancers on the tight or slack rope; the thrower of

somersaults; the itinerant cock-fighter, who would fight his cock against all comers for a guinea a side; the horse-dealer; the quack doctor, and his Merry-Andrew; the pedlar with his pack; the cheap book-seller, and the ballad-crier, with many more of the great tribe of wanderers. Ralph walked with them along the road, and heard their stories. He also learned some of the strange language in which they talk to each other when minded not to be understood by the bystanders.

When they came to their destination, and set up their canvas booths, he stayed too, and enjoyed the fun of the fair. At seventeen there is plenty of time to make your fortune, and why grudge a few days spent in watching the humours of a country fair? To be sure it cost some money, but he had still a good many of his guineas left, and no one could think a shilling or two ill-spent if one could see Pizarro acted in the most enthralling manner, or hear the most charming singer in the whole world, dainty with ribbons, and a saucy straw hat, sing, "Tis a Pretty Little Heart," or "Ben Bowsprit," or "Ned, You've no Call to Me." Besides, there were the sports. Ralph played the cudgels one day and got a broken head, and won a "plain hat, worth sixteen shillings," but no one would give him more than four shillings and twopence for it; also he tried a fall, but was thrown by one mightier than himself in the Cumberland back-stroke; and he bowled for a cheese but did not win; and he longed to run in a sack but thought it beneath the dignity of a full-grown man. Also, there were lotteries; you could put in and draw everywhere all day long; there were prizes of sixpence, and prizes of ten pounds; he put in; sometimes he won, but oftener he lost, which is generally the way with sportsmen and those who wait upon the Goddess of Chance. At this Capua, or Paradise of Pleasures, which was then, and is still, called Grantham, Ralph had well-nigh taken a step which would have made his story much less interesting to us, though perhaps fuller of incident. For he made acquaintance—being a youth of innocent heart, and apt to believe in the honesty and virtue of everybody—with the company of players. Now it happened, first, that the troop were sadly in want of a young actor, if only to play up to the manager's daughter; and secondly, that this young lady, who was as beautiful as the day and as vivacious as Mrs. Brace-

girdle (she afterwards became a most famous London actress, and married an aged earl), cast eyes of favour on the handsome lad, longed very much for him to play Romeo to her Juliet, or Othello to her Desdemona, or any other part in which the beauty of a handsome woman is set off by the beauty of a handsome fellow, a thing which very few actresses can understand: they think, which is a great mistake, that it is better for them to be the only well-favoured creature on the stage. Wherefore the manager took Ralph aside privately, and offered him refreshment, either ale, or rumbo, or Barbadoes water, with tobacco if he chose, and had serious conversation with him, providing all his victuals and those as abundant as the treasury would allow, and a salary—say five shillings a week, to begin in a few months, as soon as he had learned to act, and to teach him the rudiments; and the honour and glory of playing principal parts; and his own daughter to play up to; and a possible prospect of appearing at Drury Lane.

It was a tempting offer; the stage—even the stage in a barn—seemed splendid to the lad; the voice and manner of the manager were seductive; more seductive still was the voice of his daughter. When she lifted her great eyes and met his he trembled and could not say her nay; when she laid her pretty hand upon his, and begged him to stay with them and be her Romeo, what could he reply? Yet he remembered in time that he was on his way to seek his fortune; that the troop were obviously out at elbows, all horribly poor, and apparently badly fed; that to fall in love with an actress was not the beginning he had contemplated; and that Drusy, for her part, would certainly not consider a strolling-actor's life as the most honourable in the world. He took a resolution: he would think no more upon those limpid eyes; he hardened his heart; he would fly. He did fly; but not before the young actress, who was already beyond his own age, and ought to have known better, had laid her arms round his neck and kissed farewell, with many tears, to her first love who would not love her in return. But her father was not displeased, and said, speaking more from a business point of view than out of paternal tenderness, that she would act the better for the little disappointment, and that it does them good, when they are young, to feel something of what they

are always pretending. Said it put backbone into their attitudes and real tears in their eyes. Nothing on the stage so difficult as real tears, except a blush, which cannot be had for love or money.

Thus it happened that it was four or five weeks before Ralph got to London.

He arrived by way of Highgate. He reached the top of Highgate Hill at four in the afternoon. Here he sat down to rest, and to look upon the city he had come so far to see. There had been rain, but the clouds had blown over, leaving a blue sky, and a bright sun, and a clear air. He saw in the distance the towers and steeples of London; his long journey was done; the fortune he came to seek was—where was it? All the long way from Warkworth it seemed to him that when he reached London he would immediately find that thing known as fortune in some visible and tangible form, waiting to be seized by his strong young hands. Yet now that he saw before him the City of the Golden Pavement it seemed as if, perhaps—it was a chilling thought—he might not know or recognise, or be able to seize this fortune when he actually saw it. What is it like—Good Fortune? In other words he began for the first time to experience the coldness of doubt which sometimes falls upon the stoutest of us. His cheek was by this time burned a deeper brown; his hands were dyed and tanned by the June sun; his coat and waistcoat were stained with travel and with rain; his shoes were worn through the soles; in his pocket jingled the last two of his eleven guineas. When they were gone, he reflected with dismay, what would have to be done? But it was not a time to sit and think. Every fortune must have its beginning; every young adventurer must make a start; every Dick Whittington must enter the City of London. He rose, seized his bundle, and set off down the hill, singing to keep up his spirits, with as much alacrity as if he were only just starting on his way from Warkworth, and as if his heart was still warmed by the recollection of his cousin's bruises.

The way from Highgate to London lies along a pleasant road between tall hedges. On either side are fields and woods, and here and there a gentleman's seat or the country box of a successful citizen. Presently the boy reached Highbury, where the road bends south, and he passed Islington, with its old church and its

narrow shady lanes thick with trees. On his right he saw a great crowd in a garden, and there was music. This was Sadler's Wells. Soon after this he arrived at Clerkenwell Green, and so by a maze of streets, not knowing whither he went, to Smithfield, where he found himself in the midst of the crowd which fills all the streets of the city from dawn till night. Such a crowd, men so rough, he had never seen before. They seemed to take pleasure in jestling and hustling each other as they went along. It gave occasion for profane oaths, strange threats, the exhibition of courage, and the provocation of fear. If they carried loads they went straight ahead, caring nothing who was in the way. Some were fighting, some were swearing, some were walking leisurely, some were hastening along as if there was not a moment to be lost. There were open shops along one side; on another side was a great building, but what it was Ralph knew not. The broad open space was covered with pens and hurdles for cattle, and at the corners were booths and carts from which all kinds of things were sold. A man in a long black gown, with a tall hat and a venerable white beard, stood upon a platform in one place, a clown beside him, holding something in his hand and bawling lustily. When he was silent the clown turned somersaults. Ralph drew nearer and listened. He was selling a magic balsam which cured wounds as well as diseases. "Only yesterday, gentlemen," the quack was saying, "at four in the afternoon, a young nobleman was brought to me run through the body. He bought the balsam, gentlemen, and is already recovered, though weak from loss of blood." "Buy! buy! buy!" shouted the clown. The people looked on, laughed, and went their way. Yet some stayed and bought a box of the precious ointment. Then there was a woman selling gin from a firkin or small cask on a cart. Her customers sat upon a stool and drank this dreadful stuff, which, as the ingenious Hogarth has shown, makes their cheeks pale and their eyes dull. And there was a stall in which well-dressed city ladies sat eating sweetmeats, march pane, and China oranges, while outside stood a cow, and a woman beside her crying, "A can of milk, ladies! A can of red cow's milk!" The boy looked about here a while, and passed on, wondering what great holiday was going. He knew not where he was, but that he was in London town. He was to find

the sign of the Leg and Star in Cheapside. Perhaps he would see it as he walked along. If not, he would ask. Meantime the novelty of the crowd and the noise of the streets pleased him, and he walked slowly with the rest. He would wait until there passed some gentleman of grave appearance of whom he could ask the way. But he was in no hurry. He went on, and although he knew not where he was, he walked through Giltspur Street, past Cock Lane (where afterwards appeared the ghost). On his left he saw Newgate, and so through Great Old Bailey to Ludgate Hill, where, indeed, for the magnificence of the people and the splendour of the shops he was indeed astonished. There were few of the rude jostling people here. Most were gentlemen in powdered wigs, ruffles, and gold-headed canes, being the better class of citizens taking the air in the evening before supper, or ladies in hoops and silks, with gold chains, fans, and gloves, walking with their husbands or their lovers, very beautiful to behold. The shops, not yet shut for the day, had all sorts of signs swinging from the wall. There were the Frying Pan and Drum, the Hog in Armour, the Bible and Swan, the Whale and Crow, the Shovel and Boot, the Razor and Strop, the Axe and Bottle, the Spanish Galleon, the Catherine-Wheel, and a hundred others. But he saw not the sign of the Leg and Star.

It was growing late. The boy was hungry and tired. He looked in at a coffee-house, but the company within, the crowds of fine gentlemen—some drinking coffee, wine, and brandy, and some smoking pipes—and the gaily-dressed young women who stood behind the counter, frightened him. He did not dare go in and call for a cup of coffee; besides, he had never tasted coffee. Then he passed a barber's shop, and thought he might ask of the barber, because at Warkworth the barber was everybody's friend, and perhaps this city barber might take after so good an example. He looked in at the open door, but quickly retreated. For within the shop were two or three gentlemen in the hands of the apprentices; and one, whose bald head was wrapped in a handkerchief, was singing some song which began, "Happy is the child whose father has gone to the devil," while the barber himself, with an apron on and a white nightcap, sat in a chair playing an accompaniment on a kind of guitar. So Ralph went on his way, wondering what

next he should see in London, and where this fortune of his might be found. Presently there came slowly along the street a venerable gentleman in an ample wig and a full black gown. He seemed to have a benevolent countenance. Ralph stopped him, and, pulling off his hat, ventured to ask this reverend divine if he would condescend to tell him the shortest way to the sign of the Leg and Star in Cheapside.

"Stay, young man," said the clergyman; "I am somewhat hard of hearing."

He pulled out and adjusted very slowly an ear-trumpet, into which Ralph bellowed his question. His reverence then removed the instrument, replaced it in his pocket, and shook his finger at the boy.

"So young," he said, "yet already corrupted! Boy, bethink thee that Newgate is but in the next street."

With these words he went on his way, and left the lad greatly perplexed and humbled, and wondering what it was that he was supposed to have said.

It was, in short, seven of the clock when he found himself at the place whither he was bound. He had been wandering for an hour and a half, looking about him, and at last ventured to ask the way of a servant-girl, who seemed astonished that he should not know so simple a thing as the most expeditious road to Cheapside, seeing that it was only the other side of Paul's. But she told him, and he presently found himself in the broad and wealthy street called Cheapside.

The Leg and Star was on the south side, between Bread Street and Bow Church. It was a glover's shop, and because it was growing late, the boxes of gloves were now taken from the window, and the apprentices were putting all away. Ralph stopped and looked at the sign, then at the letter—which was not a little crumpled and travel-stained—and again at the sign. Yes, it must be the house, the sign of the Leg and Star, in Cheapside.

At the door of the shop stood a tall and portly man, between fifty and sixty years of age, with large red cheeks and double chin. He was dressed in plain broadcloth and tye-wig, but he wore ruffles and neck-cloth of fine white linen laced, as became a substantial citizen. Ralph knew it could be none other than Mr. Hetherington, wherefore he took off his hat and bowed low.

"What is thy business, young man?" asked the master glover.

"Sir, I bear a letter from your honour's

daughter, now staying at Warkworth, in Northumberland."

"My daughter! Then, prithee, boy, who are you?"

"My name is Ralph Embleton, and——"

"Thou art the son, then, of my old friend, Jack Embleton? Come in, lad, come in." He seized the boy by the arm and dragged him into the house and across the shop to the sitting-room at the back. "Wife! wife!" he cried. "Here is a messenger from Drusy with a letter. Give me the letter, boy. And this is young Ralph Embleton, son of my old friend and gossip, Jack Embleton, with whom I have had many a fight in the old days. Poor Jack! poor Jack! Well, we live. Let us be thankful. Make the boy welcome; give him supper. Make him a bed somewhere. What art thou doing in this great place, lad? So the letter—aye! the letter."

He read the superscription, and slowly opened it and began to read:

"DEAR AND HON'D PARENTS,—The bairn of this is Rafe, who has run away from cruell treetment, and wants to make his fortune in London. He will tell you that I am well, and that I pray for your helthe, and that you will be kind to Rafe. —Your loving and dutiful d'ter,

"DRUSILLA."

"So," went on the merchant, "cruel treatment. Who hath cruelly ill-treated thee, boy?"

"I have run away, sir," he said, "from my cousin, Mathew Humble, because he seeks every opportunity to do me a mischief. And, since he is my guardian, there is no remedy but to endure or to run away."

"Ah! Mathew Humble, who bought my farm. Sam Embleton married his father's sister. Did your Uncle Sam leave Morwick Mill to Mathew?"

"No, sir; he left it to me."

"And Mathew is your guardian? Yet the mill is your own, and you have run away from your own property? Morwick Mill is a pretty estate. It likes me not. Yet you would fain seek your fortune in London. That is well. Fortune, my lad, is only to be made by men of resolute hearts, like me." He expanded as he spoke, and seemed to grow two feet higher and broad in proportion. "And strong arms, like mine"—he hammered his chest as if it had been an anvil—"and keen eyes, like mine. Weak men fail and get

trampled on in London. Cowardly men get set on one side, while the strong and the brave march on. I shall be, without doubt, next year, a Common Councilman. Strong men, clever men, brave men, boy, march, I say, from honour to greater honour. I shall become Alderman in two or three years, if Providence so disposes. There is no limit to the exalted ambitions of the London citizen. You would climb like me. You would be, some day, my Lord Mayor. It is well. It does you credit. It is a noble ambition."

Meantime a maid had been spreading the table with supper, and, to say the truth, the eyes of the boy were turned upon the cold meats with so visible a longing, that the merchant could not choose but observe his hunger. So he bade him sit and eat. Now, while Ralph devoured his supper, being at the moment one of the hungriest lads in all England, the honest glover went on talking in grand, if not boastful language, about himself and his great doings. Yet, inexperienced as he was, Ralph could not but wonder, because, although the merchant was certainly past fifty years of age, the great things were all in the future. He would become one of the richest merchants in London; he would be Lord Mayor; he would make his daughter a great heiress; he designed that she should marry a lord at least. At this announcement Ralph blushed and his heart sank. One of the reasons, said the merchant, why he kept her still in Northumberland was that he did not wish her to return home until they were removed to a certain great house which he had in his mind, but had not yet purchased. She should go in silk and satin; he would give such great entertainments that even the king should hear of them; London was ever the city for noble feasting. And so he talked, until the lad's brain reeled for thinking of all these splendours, and he grew sad in thinking how far off Drusilla would be as, one by one, all these grandeurs became achieved.

Another thing he observed: that, while the husband talked in his confident and braggart way, the wife, who was a thin woman, sat silent and sometimes sighed. Why did she sigh? Did she want to live on in obscurity? Had she no ambition?

Then the merchant filled and lit a pipe of tobacco, and proceeded to tell Ralph how he would have to begin upon this ambitious career in search of fortune. First, he would have to be an apprentice.

"I was myself," said Mr. Hetherington, "an apprentice, though who would think it now?" As an apprentice he would sweep and clean out the shop, open it in the morning, and shut it at night, wait upon the customers all day, run errands, obey dutifully his master, learn the business, watch his master's interests, behave with respect to his betters, show zeal in the despatch of work, get no holidays or play-time, never see the green fields except on Good Fridays, take for meals what might be given him, which would certainly not be slices off the sirloin, and sleep under the counter at night. In short, the shop would be his work-room, his parlour, his eating-room, and his bed-room.

The boy listened to his instructions with dismay. Was this the road to fortune? Was he to become a slave for some years? But—after? His apprenticeship finished, it appeared that he might, if he could find money, open a shop, and become a master. But most young men, he learned, found it necessary to remain in the employment of their masters for some years, and in some cases for the whole term of their natural lives.

He did not consider that he had already such a fortune as would, if laid out with judgment, enable him to open a shop or to buy a partnership. He forgot at the time that he was the owner of Morwick Mill. It seemed to him, being so young and inexperienced, that he had run away from his inheritance, and abandoned it to Mathew. He, too, might therefore have to remain in a master's employment. This was fine fortune, truly, to be a servant all your days. And the boy began already even to regret his Cousin Mathew's blows and Barbara's cruel tongue.

His pipe finished, the merchant remembered that at eight his club would meet, and therefore left the lad with his wife.

"Boy," she leaned over the table and whispered eagerly as soon as her husband was gone, "have you come up to London without money to become a merchant?"

"Indeed, madam," he replied, "I know not what I may become."

"Then fly," she said; "go home again. Follow the plough, become a tinker, a tailor, a cobbler—anything that is honest. Trade is uncertain. For one who succeeds a dozen are broke; you know not, any moment, but that you also may break. Your fortune hangs upon a hundred chances. Alas! if one of these fail, there is the

Fleet, or may be Newgate, or Marshalsea, or Whitecross Street, or the King's Bench, or the Clink—there are plenty of places for the bestowal of poor debtors—for yourself, and for your wife and innocent children ruin and starvation."

"Yet," said Ralph, "Mr. Hetherington is not anxious."

"He leaves anxiety," she replied bitterly, "to his wife."

Then she became silent, and spoke no more to the boy, but sat with her lips working as one who conversed with herself. And from time to time she sighed as if her heart was breaking.

In the morning the merchant was up betimes, and began again upon the glories of the city.

"Art still of the same mind?" he asked. "Wilt thou be like Whittington and Gresham, and me, also one of those who climb the tree?"

Then Ralph confessed with a blush—which mattered nothing, so deep was the ruddy brown upon his cheek—that he found city honours dearly bought at the price of so much labour and confinement.

"Then," said his adviser in less friendly tones, "what will you do?"

Ralph asked if there was nothing that a young man may do besides work at a trade or sit in a shop.

"Why, truly, yes," Mr. Hetherington replied with severity; "he may become a highwayman, and rob upon the road, taking their money from honest tradesmen and poor farmers—a gallant life indeed, and so he will presently hang in chains, or be anatomised and set up in Surgeon's Hall. There is the end of your fresh air for you."

"But, with respect, sir," Ralph persisted, "I mean in an honest way."

"If he is rich enough he may be a scholar of Cambridge, and so take orders, or he may become a physician, or a lawyer, or a schoolmaster, or a surgeon, and go to sea in His Majesty's ships and lead a dog's life, or a soldier and go a fighting——"

"Let me be a soldier," cried the boy.

"Why, why? But you must first get His Majesty's commission, and to get this you must beg for letters to my Lord This and my Lord That, and dangle about great houses, praying for their influence, and bribe the lacqueys, and then perhaps never get your commission after all."

This was discouraging.

"Rolling stones, lad," said the great merchant, "gather no moss. Better stand

quiet behind the counter, sweep out shop, serve customers, and keep accounts, and perhaps some day be partner and grow rich."

But Ralph hung his head.

"Then how can I help thee, foolish boy? Yet, because I knew thy father, and for Drusy's sake—— Stay, would you go to India?"

To India! Little, indeed, of the great doings in India reached the town of Warkworth. Yet Ralph had heard the Vicar talking with Mr. Carnaby of Colonel Clive and the famous battle of Plassy. To India! His eye flashed.

"Yes, sir; I would willingly go to India."

"My worthy friend, Mr. Nathaniel Silvertop, is in the service of the Company. Come, let us seek his counsel."

They walked, the boy being much astonished at the crowd, the noise, and the never ceasing business of the streets, down Cheapside, through the Poultry, past the new Mansion House and the Royal Exchange, into Cornhill, where stands the Honourable East India Company's house, a plain solid building, adorned with pillars of the Doric order. Mr. Hetherington led the way into a great hall, where was already assembled a crowd of men who had favours to ask of the directors, and finding a servant he sent his name to Mr. Silvertop.

Presently, for nothing was done in undignified haste in this house, Mr. Silvertop himself—a gentleman of three score, and of grave appearance—descended the stairs. To him Mr. Hetherington unfolded his business.

Here, he said, was a young fellow from Northumberland, heir to a small and pretty estate, but encumbered for three or four years to come with a guardian, whose affection he appeared to have unfortunately lost, so that it would be well for both to remain apart; but he was a young gentleman of roving tastes, who would fain see a little of the world, and—but this he whispered—a brave and bold fellow.

Mr. Silvertop regarded the lad attentively.

"Our writers," he said solemnly, "go out on small salaries. They seldom rise above four hundred or five hundred pounds a year at the most. Yet—mark this, young gentleman—so great are their chances in India that they sometimes come home at forty, or even less, with a hundred—aye, two hundred thousand pounds. Think

upon that, boy! So great a thing it is to serve this Honourable Company."

The boy's eyes showed no emotion. A dull dog, indeed, he seemed to Mr. Silvertop, not to tremble at the mere mention of so vast a sum.

"Leave him here, my good friend," said Mr. Silvertop. "I have business, but I will return and speak with him again. He can walk in the hall and wait."

Mr. Hetherington went his way, and Ralph waited.

After an hour or so, he saw Mr. Silvertop coming down the stairs again. He was escorting, or leading to the door, or in some way behaving in respectful and deferential fashion to a tall and splendid gentleman, brave in scarlet, wearing a sash and a sword and a gold-laced hat. At the foot of the stairs, Mr. Silvertop bowed low to this gentleman, who joined a little group of gentlemen, some of them also in scarlet. He seemed to be the chief among them, for they all behaved to him with the greatest respect. Then Mr. Silvertop looked about in the crowd, and spying Ralph, beckoned him to draw near and speak with him.

"So," said Mr. Silvertop, "you are the lad. Yes, I remember." Ralph thought it strange that he should not remember, seeing that it was but an hour or so since Mr. Silvertop had spoken last with him. "You are recommended by my friend Mr. Hetherington. Well, I know not—we are pestered with applications for our writerships. Every runaway"—Ralph blushed—"every out-at-elbows younger son"—the great gentleman in scarlet, who was close at hand, here turned his head and looked at the lad with a little interest—"every poor curate's brat who can read and cypher wants to be sent to India."

"You cannot, sir," said the gentleman in scarlet, "send too many Englishmen to India. I would that the whole country was ruled by Englishmen—yet not by quill-drivers."

He added the last words in a lower voice, yet Ralph heard them.

Mr. Silvertop bowed low, and turned again to the boy.

"A writership," he continued, "is the greatest gift that can be bestowed upon a deserving lad. Remember that, and if—but I cannot promise. I would oblige my friend if I could—but I will not undertake anything. With my influence—yet I do not say for certain; a writership is a greater matter than you seem to think—I might bring thy case before the directors. Is thy

handwriting fair, and thy knowledge of figures absolute?"

Ralph blushed, because his handwriting was short of the clerical standard.

"I thank you, sir," he said, "but I love not writing. I would rather carry a sword than a pen."

"Ta-ta-ta," replied Mr. Silvertop, whose influence lay wholly in the mercantile department of the company. "We waste our time. A sword! I know naught of swords. Go thy ways, boy—go thy ways. Is London City, think you, a place for the carriage of swords? Go, take the king's shilling, and join a marching regiment. I warrant you enough of swords and bayonets."

Ralph bowed and turned away sadly. The gentleman in scarlet, who had apparently been listening to the conversation, followed him to the doors with thoughtful eyes.

"A lad who would rather handle a sword than a pen," he said. "Are there many such lads left in this city of trade and greed?"

They looked, at the Leg and Star, that day, for the return of the young Northumbrian in time for dinner. But he came not; nor did he come at night; nor did he ever come. No one knew whither he had gone or what had become of him, and much Mr. Hetherington feared that in this wicked town he had been enticed by some designing wretch to his destruction.

CHAPTER IV. DRUSILLA'S STORY.

I WAS born in Cheapside, almost beneath the bells of Bow, on October the fifth, in the year of grace seventeen hundred and fifty-three, being the fifth and youngest child of Solomon Hetherington and Prudence his wife. My father was a citizen and glover, a member of the Honourable Company of Glovers, his ambition being always to be elected, before becoming Lord Mayor, Master of his Company. These ambitions are laudable in a city merchant, yet, alas! they are not always attained, and in my unhappy father's case they were very far from being reached, as you shall presently hear.

There is, I am told, some quality in the London air which causeth the city, in spite of much that is foolish as regards cleanliness, to be a healthy place, and favourable to children. So that, for my own part, though I was brought up in the very centre and heart of the city, with no green fields

to run in, nor any gardens save those belonging to the Drapers' Company, I, as well as my brothers and sisters, was a healthy and well-faring child up to the age of eight, when I, with all my brothers and sisters, was afflicted with that scourge of mankind, small-pox. This dreadful disease, to the unspeakable grief of my parents, killed their four eldest children, and spared none but myself, the youngest, and a girl. To lose three strong and promising boys, the hope of the house, as well as a girl of fourteen, already beginning to be useful, was a most dreadful thing, and I wonder that my mother, who passionately loved her boys, ever recovered cheerfulness. Indeed, until her dying day she kept the annual recurrence of this day, which robbed her of her children—for they all died on the same day—in prayer and fasting and tears. Yet I was left, and, by further blessing of Heaven, I recovered so far that, although I was weakly and ailing for a long time, I was not marked by a single spot or any of those ugly pits, which sometimes ruin many a woman's beauty and thereby rob her of that choicest blessing, the love of a husband. So different, however, was I from the stout and hearty girl before the small-pox, that my parents were advised that the best chance to save my life—this being for the time their chief and even their only hope—was to send me into the country, there to live in fresh pure air, running in the sun, and fed on oatmeal porridge, good milk, fat bacon, and new-laid eggs.

Then my father bethought him of his own mother who lived far away indeed from London, namely at Warkworth, in Northumberland. And he proposed to my mother that they should take this long journey, carrying me with them, and leave me for a while in charge of my grandmother; which being done, and my health showing signs of amendment, they were constrained to go back to their own business, leaving me in good hands, yet with sorrowful hearts, because they were going home without me. And for six or seven years I saw them no more.

No girl, to be sure, had kinder treatment or more indulgent governess than myself. My grandmother, Dame Hetherington—though not a lady by birth, but only a farmer's daughter—lived in the house which stands outside the town, beyond the bridge, among the trees. You may know it by its garden and green railings. It is a small house, yet large enough for the uses

and wants of an old lady and a single serving-maid. She was then about seventy years of age, but this is considered young in Northumberland, and I have seen many ladies from London and the south country, or even out of Scotland, who at fifty were not so active. She lived upon an annuity, forty pounds a year, which her son bought for her when he sold his father's farm of thirty acres; it was bought by Mathew Humble. As for the cottage, it was also my father's, and the Dame lived in it, rent free.

It was the Dame, my grandmother, who taught me all household things, such as to spin, to sew, to darn, to hem, to knit, to embroider, to bake and brew, to make puddings, cakes, jellies, and conserves, to compound skilfully cowslip, ginger, and gooseberry wine; to clean, sweep, dust, and keep in order my own and all the other rooms in the house. It was the Vicar's wife who undertook—there being no school in the town, save a humble Dame's School—to teach me reading, writing, cyphering, together with my Catechism and the Great Scheme of Christian Redemption, of which, being the daughter of pious parents, I already possessed the rudiments. There were not many books to read in the house, because my grandmother did not read; but there were the Bible, the Apocrypha, the Pilgrim's Progress, a book of Hymns and Pious Songs, and a bundle of the cheap books which tell of Valentine and Orson, Dick Whittington, the last Appearance of the Devil, and the latest Examples of Divine Wrath against fools and profligates.

But because the Dame, my grandmother, was a wise woman, and reflected that I was sent away from London in order to recover my health and grow strong, I was allowed and encouraged to run about in the open air as much as possible, so that, as this part of England is quite safe, and there are here few gipsies (who mostly stay on the other side of Cheviot) nor any robbers on the road—nor, indeed, any road at all to signify—I very soon grew to know the whole country within the reach of a hearty girl's feet.

There is plenty to see, though this part of Northumberland is flat, while the rest is wild and mountainous. Firstly, there are the ruins of the old castle, about which it is always pleasant for a child to run and climb, or for a grown person to meditate on the vanity of earthly things, seeing that this pile of ruins was once a great and

stately castle, and this green sward was once hidden beneath the feet of fierce soldiers, who now are dust and ashes in the grave-yard. From the castle one looks down upon the Coquet, which would ever continue in my eyes the sweetest of rivers, even were I to see the far-famed Tiber, or the silver Thames, or the great Ganges, or the mysterious Nile, or even the sacred Jordan. It winds round the foot of the hill on which the castle is built. There is one spot upon its banks where I have often stood to watch the castle rising proudly—albeit, in ruins—above the hill, and wholly reflected in the tranquil waters below. It was my delight to scramble down the banks and to wander fearless along the windings of the tortuous stream, watching the brightness of its waters, now deep, now broad, now silent, now bubbling with the fish leaping up and disappearing, and the woods hanging on the rising bank. If you sat quite quiet, moving not so much as a finger, you might, if you were lucky, presently see a great otter swimming along in the shadow of the bank, and you would certainly see a water-rat sitting in the sun. But if you move so much as an eyelid the rat drops into the water like a stone. Or if you crossed the river, which you can very easily do in some parts by taking off your shoes and stockings and wading, you could go visit the Hermitage. There is the little chapel in which the hapless solitary prayed, and the figure which he rudely sculptured, and even the stone bed on which he lay and the steps of the altar worn by his knees. But children think little of these things, and to me it was only a place where one could rest in cool shade when the sun was hot, or seek shelter from the cold blast of the winter wind.

Higher up the river was Morwick Mill, where Ralph Embleton lived with his uncle.

Or, again, if instead of crossing the bridge and going up to the castle, you walked across the fields which lay at the back of the garden—wild and barren fields covered with tufts of coarse grass—you came, after half a mile or so of rough walking, to the sea-shore, fringed with low sand-hills. It was an endless joy to run over these hills and explore their tiny valleys and peaks of twenty feet high at least. Or one could wander on the sands, looking at the waves, an occupation which never tires, or watching sea-gulls sailing with long white wings in the breeze or

the little oxbirds on the sands. If you walked down instead of up the river, you came, after three miles, to its mouth and the little town of Amble, where every man is a fisherman.

Beyond the town, half a mile out to sea, lies the little island of Coquet. Ralph once rowed me across the narrow channel, and we explored the desert island and thought of Robinson Crusoe which he had read and told me. But this was before the time when we took to pretending at ghosts.

In those days, which seem to have been so happy, and I dare say were, Ralph was free, and could come and go as pleased him best, save that he went every morning to the Vicar, who taught him Latin and Greek, and sometimes remembered—but in kindly moderation—the advice of Solomon. The reason of this freedom was that his uncle, with whom he lived, loved the lad greatly, and intended great things for him, even designing that he should become a great scholar and go to Cambridge. For once there was a member of his family who took to learning and rose from being a poor scholar in that University, which has ever been a kindly nurse or foster-mother of poor scholars, to be a Doctor of Divinity and a Bishop. But my Ralph was never to be a Bishop, nor even a Doctor of Divinity. And a sad change was to happen at the mill.

Everybody was our friend in those days, from Mr. Cuthbert Carnaby, Justice of the Peace, and the Vicar, down to Sailor Nan and her lodger, Dan Gedge, the Strong Man. Everybody had a kind word for Ralph, and nobody told me then how wicked it was to run about with a boy of such unnatural depravity. This, as you will see, was to come. He was a tall boy for his years, and he was six years older than myself, which proves how good-natured he must have been, for few boys of fifteen or sixteen care for the companionship of a girl of nine or ten. As for his face, it has always been the dearest face in the world to me, and always will be, so that I know not whether other people would call it a handsome face. His eyes were eager, as if—which was the case—he always wanted to be up and doing. They were blue eyes, because he was a Northumberland lad, yet not soft and dreamy eyes, as is too often the case with the people of the north. His face was oval and his features regular. He carried his head thrown back, and walked erect with both hands ready, as if

there was generally a fight to be expected, and it was well to be prepared. To be sure, Ralph was one of those who love a fight and do not sulk if they are beaten, but bide a bit and then on again.

On Sunday afternoons, who so ready as he at quarterstaff or wrestling, or any of the manly sports? As regards the cock-fighting, bull-baiting, and dog-fighting, with which our common people so love to inflame their passions and to destroy their sensibility, Ralph would none of it, because he loved dogs, and, indeed, all animals. But at an otter-hunt he was always to the front. He was not fond of books and school-learning, yet he loved to read of foreign lands and of adventures. The Vicar lent him such books, and he told me, long before I thought that he too would become such an one himself, of Pizarro, Cortes, Raleigh, and Francis Drake (not to speak of Robinson Crusoe and Captain Gulliver), and of what great things they did and what fine places they visited. A brave boy always, whose heart leaped up when he heard of brave things.

All the town, I have said, were our friends. But of course we had some who were more with us than others. For instance, what should we have been without the Fugleman? To those who did not know him he was the chief Terror of the town, being so stern and lean in appearance, so stiff and upright, and, besides, officially connected with such things as stocks, whipping-post, pound, and pillory: names of rebuke. To Ralph and to me he was a trusted and thoughtful friend, almost a playfellow. His room at the gateway of the castle, to which he had fitted a door and a window of glass in a wooden frame, was full of things curious and delightful. He had eggs strung in long festoons round the walls, and could tell us where to look for the nests in spring; he had a ferret in a box; he had fishing-rods and nets; he had traps for wild fowl, and for rabbits; he had a fowling-piece, and he could tell us stories without end of his campaigns. Why, this brave fellow, who was for thirty years and more in the Fourteenth Berkshire Regiment, could tell us of the great review held on Salisbury Plain by his majesty King George the First, of pious memory. He could tell us of the famous Siege of Gibraltar, when the regiment was commanded by Colonel Clayton, and of the Battle of Dettingen, where that gallant officer was killed; of Culloden and the Young Pretender. A brave regiment

always and strong in Protestant faith, though much given to drink and only kept in paths of virtue by strict discipline and daily floggings.

Had it not been for the Fugleman—and Sailor Nan, of whom more anon—I for one should never have learned about foreign places at all, any more than the rest of us in Warkworth. Now, indeed, having heard him talk about them so often, I seem to know the phlegmatic Dutch and the slow German, and the Frenchmen with their love of glory, and the Spaniards with their Papistical superstitions, and the cruel ways of the Moors, because the Fourteenth were once at Tangiers.

Ralph, of course, knew much more than I, because he was more curious, being a boy, and asked many more questions, being always, as I have said already, thirsty for information concerning other people. No one else in Warkworth had been abroad, not even Mr. Carnaby, though gentlemen of good birth, like himself, sometimes made the grand tour in their youth, accompanied by tutors. Yet Mr. Carnaby said that they often learned more wickedness than good, and would have been better at home. No one else talked about foreigners or knew anything of them, finding sufficient subject for conversation in the weather and the events of the day in town and country side. I do not except Sailor Nan, although she had sailed over many seas, because a person who only goes to sea remains always, it seems to me, in one spot.

Northumberland is enough, indeed, for the Northumbrians. To begin with, there is no part of England where there is so much left to be told by the old women, who are ever the collectors and treasurers of things gone by and old stories. Why, men are as wasteful of their recollections as of their money, and were it not for the women, the past would perish. It seems to me as if the Dame could never come to an end with the tales she told me, the songs she sang me (in a pretty voice still, though a little cracked with age), the proverbs she had for every occasion, and the adventures of many people with ghosts and fairies. There was the story of the Loathly Worm of Bamborough, to begin with, and the terrible tale of Sir Guy the Seeker. I have stood amid the ruins of Dunstanburgh and wondered where might be the door through which he entered when he found the beautiful lady. Then there was the story of the farmer who found King Arthur and all his knights in

an enchanted sleep, under Sewing Shields Castle. He saw waiting for the first comer a sword and a horn. He drew the sword, indeed, but was too terrified to blow the horn.

Oh, woe betide that evil day
On which the witless wight was born,
Who drew the sword, the garter cut,
But never blew the bugle-horn.

There was the story of the simple man of Ravensworth who died, and was dead for twenty-four hours, during which he was permitted to see both Heaven and Hell, and was sent back to earth to tell the Bishop that he must prepare for death. There was the story of the other simple countryman who had a dream of treasure. In his dream he saw the place where the treasure lay. It was in a triangular space made by three great stones beneath the ground. That simple man was so foolish as to tell his dream. Again the dream came to him. This time he got up early in the morning and went out, spade in hand, to dig. Alas! he was too late. Someone else had been there before him, guided by the first dream, and all that was left was the triangular space made by the three great stones. There was the other treasure-story connected with the name of Nelly the Knocker. Nelly the Knocker was the ghost of an old woman. She came every evening at dusk, and she stationed herself before a great stone standing by the roadside near a farm. Here she knocked with a hammer. Everybody had seen her—no one was afraid of her; the rustics were so used to her that they passed her without a shudder, though, of course, no one ventured quite close to her; her tapping was heard a long way off. One day two men thought they would dig under the stone, to see if anything was there. They dug, and they found a great pot full of gold coins. So that Nelly the Knocker was justified of her knocking. But she came no more. There was still another story of treasure: how it lay buried under a great stone, and how those who would dig for it were frightened away by a figure in white which seemed to fly from under it, no one having courage to remain after the appearance of that figure. There were, lastly, the stories of the fairies who were brought into the country by the Crusaders, never having been heard of before. I have since wondered how they were brought, whether in boxes, or in cages, or in what other way. Those of Northumberland have yellow hair; they live in chambers under green

hills; they have a great day of meeting every year, namely, on the eve of Roodsmass, called by some Hallowe'en. The chief mischief they do—it is, to be sure, a very great mischief—is to steal the babies (wherefore at reaping-time it is most dangerous to leave their little children under the hedges) and to substitute changelings.

"My dear," said the Dame gravely, "I have known such a changeling. His name was Little Hobbie o' the Castleton; he was a dwarf, and wrathful by disposition, inso-much that he would draw his gully upon any of the boys who offended him. But his legs were short, whereby he was prevented from the wickedness of murder, or at least striking and wounding."

There was also the Brown Man of the Moors, but one feared him not at Warkworth, where there are no moora. And there was the fearful Ghost of Black Heddon, known as Silky, because she always appeared dressed in silk; a stately dame, the sight of whom terrified the stoutest.

These are only a few of the tales with which my childish head was filled, and though I know that scoffers may laugh, in an age which affects, with incredible boldness, to disbelieve even the most sacred things, we of the country know very well that these things are too well authenticated not to be true. As regards Silky, for instance, the man was still living, and could be spoken with, when I was a girl, who, being then a youth of tender years, proposed to personate the figure in white which sometimes stood or sat by the bridge on the road to Edlingham from Alnwick. He put on a sheet and sat upon the bridge, expecting to frighten passengers. Lo! beside him he saw, suddenly, the real ghost, saying never a word. And at sight of her he fell backwards over the bridge into the water and broke his leg, so that he went halt to his dying day. This ought to have been a warning both to Ralph and myself: but, alas! it was not.

Sailor Nan, who lived in a cottage up the street between the church and the castle, had seen many ghosts, but hers were sea-ghosts, because, though she had sailed in a great many seas, she had never been ashore—I do not count an hour's run among grog-shops going ashore—in foreign parts, except at Portobello, when that place was taken in the year 1739, when she was with Admiral Burford, being also Captain of the Foretop, and at the time about thirty-six years of age; here, by

reason of a wound, her sex was discovered, so that they disrated her and sent her home. Her memory being good and her recollections being copious, her house was much frequented by young people who loved to hear how she boarded the Santa Isabella when aboard the Dorsetshire, under Admiral Delaval, or how she was present at the famous cutting out of the Pirate with the hangings at the yard-arm of the Pirate Captain and all his crew, and how the ghost of the carpenter (unjustly hanged) haunted the main deck. She was at this time—I mean, at the time when Ralph did penance—about sixty years of age. She wore a sailor's three-cornered hat, cocked, a thick woollen wrapper round her neck, and petticoats almost as short as a sailor's. She wore also thick worsted stockings and men's shoes, so that it was difficult to understand that she was a woman, not a man. Her voice could be either rough and coarse like a sailor's, or thin like a woman's, as she pleased; round her waist she tied a cord, which had a knife at the end of it. She smoked tobacco continually, and drank as much rum as ever she could get. She lived chiefly by selling tansy cakes. After she was dismissed from the navy she married twice. Her first husband was hanged for selling a stolen pig at Morpeth Fair, and her second hanged himself—some said on account of his wife's cudgel. "Himneys," she would say, "it's a fine thing to dee your own fair death." Her conversation was full of strange sea oaths, and she was still as strong as most men are at thirty, with thick brawny arms and sturdy feet, a woman who feared no man. Besides her tansy cakes she told fortunes to those who would give her silver, and she grew in her garden, and sold, marsh and marigold. A tough hardened old woman, her face beaten and hardened by all kinds of weather, who sat outside her door on a big stone all day long, winter and summer, rain, snow, frost, hail, east wind, south wind, sunshine, cloud, or clear, smoking a black pipe of tobacco, and carrying in her hand a stick with which she threatened the children when they ran after her, crying, "Sailor Nan, Sailor Nan; half a woman, half a man!" But I do not think that she ever harmed any of them. People came to see her from all the country-side, partly to talk with her, because she was so full of stories, and partly to look at a woman who had actually carried a cutlass, handled pike and marlinspike, been Captain of the

Foretop, brandished a petty officer's rope's-end, manned a boat, fought ashore side by side with the redcoats, and valiantly boarded an enemy. In the end she lived to be a hundred and eight, but she never altered or looked any older, or lost her faculties, or drank less rum, or smoked less tobacco.

When Ralph was nearly fifteen, a great and terrible misfortune befell him. His uncle, Mr. Samuel Embleton, though not an old man, died suddenly. After he was buried it was found that he had left by will Morwick Mill and the farm, his household furniture, his books, which were not many, and all the money he had in the world, to Ralph as his sole heir. This inheritance proved at first the cause of great unhappiness to the poor boy. For, unfortunately, the will named Mathew Humble as the guardian and executor, to whom the testator devised his best wig and his best coat with his second-best bed and a gold-headed stick. Now it angered Mathew to think that he being also nephew and sister's son of Samuel Embleton, of Morwick Mill, was left no part or portion of this goodly heritage. It would seem that, knowing his uncle's design to send Ralph to Cambridge, and his hope that he would become a credit to the family and a pillar of the Church, he had hoped and even grown to believe firmly and to expect it as a right, that the mill at least, if not the farm, or a portion of it, would be left to him. It was, therefore, a bitter blow for him to find that he was left nothing at all except what he could make or save as guardian of the heir and administrator of the estate, with free quarters at the mill for six years. Surely for a man of probity and common-sense that would have been considered a great deal.

He came, with his sister, who was as much disappointed as himself, in a spirit of rancour, malice, and envy. He regarded the innocent boy as a supplanter. The first thing he did was to inform him that he should have no skulking or idleness. He therefore put a stop to the Latin and Greek lessons with the Vicar, and employed the boy about the work of the place, giving him the hardest and the most disagreeable tasks on the farm. For freedom was substituted servitude; for liberty, restraint; for affection and kindness, harsh language and continual floggings; while Barbara, with her tongue, that ill-governed weapon of women, made him feel, for the first time in his life, how idle, how useless, how greedy a creature he was. The boy bore with all,

as meekly as was his duty, for quite two years. But he often came to me, or to the Fugleman, with fists clenched, declaring that he would endure this ill-usage no longer, and asking in wonder what he had done to deserve it. And at such times he would swear to leave the mill and run away and seek his fortune anywhere—somewhere in the world. It was always in his mind, from the first, when Mathew began his ill-treatment, that he would run away and seek his fortune. In this design he was strengthened by the example of my father, who left the village when a boy of fourteen to seek his fortune, and found—you shall hear, presently, what he found. I dissuaded him, as much as I could, because it was dreadful for me to think of being left without him, or of his running about the country helpless and friendless. The Fugleman, who knew the world and had travelled far, pointed out to him very sensibly that he would have to endure this hardness for a very short time longer, that he was already sixteen and as tall as most men, and could not for very shame be flogged much longer; while, as for Barbara's tongue, he declared that a brave man ought not to value what a woman said, let her tongue run as free as the serjeant at drill of recruits, no more than the price of a rope's end: and again, that in five years' time, as soon as Ralph was twenty-one, he would have the right to turn his cousin out of the mill, which would then become his own property, and a very pretty property too, where an old friend would expect to find a pipe and a glass of Hollands or rum. And he promised himself to assist at the ducking in the river which he supposed that Ralph would give his cousin when that happy day should arrive, as well as at the great feast and rejoicing which he supposed would follow. The result of these exhortations, to which were added those of my grandmother, was that he remained at home, and when Mathew Humble cruelly belaboured him, he showed no anger or desire for revenge, and when Barbara smote him with harsh words and found texts out of the Bible to taunt him with, he made no reply. Nor did he rebel even though they treated him as if he were a common plough-boy and farm drudge, instead of the heir to all.

I confess, and have long felt sincerely, the wickedness of the thing which at length brought open disgrace upon poor Ralph, and drove him away from us. Yet, deserving

of blame and punishment as our actions were, I cannot but think that the conduct of Mathew in bringing the chief culprit—he knew nothing of my share or of the Fugleman's—before his Worship, Mr. Justice Carnaby, was actuated more by malice than by an honest desire to bring criminals to punishment. Besides, he had for some months before this been spreading abroad wicked rumours about Ralph, saying, among other false and malicious things, that the boy was idle, gluttonous, lying, and even thieving, insomuch that the Vicar, who knew the contrary, and that the boy was as good a lad as ever walked, though fond of merriment and a little headstrong, openly rebuked him for malice and evil-thinking, saying plainly that these things were not so, and that, if they were so, Mathew was much to blame in blabbing them about the country, rather than trying to correct the lad's faults, and doing his best to hide them from the general knowledge. Yet there are some who always believe what is spoken to one's dispraise, and sour looks and unfriendly faces were bestowed upon the boy, while my grandmother was warned not to allow me to run wild with a lad of so notorious a bad character. This is all that I meant when I said just now that at first all were our friends.

When Ralph was gone I took little joy in anything until I got my first letter from him, which was not for a very long time afterwards.

Now, one day, as I was walking sorrowfully home, having sat all the afternoon with the Fugleman, I saw Sailor Nan beckoning to me from her stone outside the door.

"Child," she said, "where's your sweetheart?"

"Alack," I replied, "I know not, Sailor Nan."

"Young maids," she went on, "must not puke and pine because they hear nothing for awhile of the lads they love. Be of good cheer. Why, I read him his fortune myself in his own left hand. Did my fortunes ever turn out wrong? As good a tale of luck and fair weather as I ever read. Come, child, give me thy hand; led me read your lines too."

It is strange how in the lines of one's hand are depicted beforehand all the circumstances of life, easy to be read beforehand by those who are wise. Yet have I been told that it is not enough to learn the rules unless you have the gift.

"He will come back," she repeated, after long looking into the hand. "Now, your own hand. Here is a long line of life—yet not as long as my own. Here is the line of marriage—a good line; a happy marriage; a fortunate girl—yet there will be trouble. Is it an old man? I cannot rightly read. Something is in the way. Trouble, and even grievous trouble. But all to come right in the end."

"Is my fortune," I asked, "connected with the fortune of Ralph?"

She laughed her rough hoarse sea-laugh.

"If it is an old man, or if it is a young man, say him nay. Bide your old love. If he press or if he threaten, say him nay. Bide your old sweetheart."

"There was an old man came over the lea,
Heigho! but I won't have 'un;
Came over the lea,
A courtin' to me,
Wi' his old grey beard just newly shaven."

She crooned out the words in a cracked and rusty voice, and pushed my hand away roughly. Then she replaced her pipe in her mouth and went on smoking the tobacco which was her chief food and her chief solace, and took no further heed of me.

CHAPTER V. A SECOND WHITTINGTON.

It becomes not a young girl to pronounce judgment openly (whatever she may think) upon the conduct of her elders, or to show resentment, whatever they may think fit to do; so that when Mathew Humble came to see my grandmother on certain small affairs which passed between them—concerning the sale of a pig, or I know not what—it was my duty, though my heart was aflame, to sit, hands in lap, quiet and mum, when I would rather, Heaven knows, have been boxing his ears and railing him in such language as I could command, for I certainly could never forget, while this man, with the fat red cheeks and pig's eyes, was drinking my grandmother's best cowlip wine, as if he had been the most virtuous of men, that it was through him—though this my grandmother knew not, for I never told her—that Ralph had been betrayed to his Worship, and so been brought to public shame; that it was this man who had beaten the boy without a cause, and that it was his sister who daily sought out hard words and cruel texts, as well as coarse crusts, with which to torture my Ralph. I remembered, as well, that it was this man who had been soundly cudgelled and flogged by the boy he had abused so shamefully.

"You have heard nothing, I dare to say, Mr. Mathew," asked the Dame, for it was now two months after the poor lad's flight, "of our young runaway, whom we in this house greatly lament and wish him well?"

"Nothing as yet," replied Mathew. Then he drank off the rest of his glass, and went on with much satisfaction: "I fear"—yet he looked as if he hoped—"that we shall hear nothing until we hear the worst, as provided by the righteous laws of this country. What, madam, can be expected of one so dead and hardened unto conscience as to offer violence and to turn upon his guardian, and take him while off his guard and unawares with bludgeons and cudgels?"

The whole town had heard by this time and knew very well how Ralph, before his flight, refused to be flogged, and fought his guardian, and vanquished him, insomuch that grievous weals were raised, and bruises sad to tell of. It was Mathew's version that he was taken by surprise. Otherwise, he said, it was nothing but Heaven's mercy prevented him from grievously wounding and hurting the boy, who ran away for fear, and dared not come back. Opinion was divided, for some called shame on Mathew for flogging so tall and strong a lad—almost a man—and others declared that stripes, and those abundant and well laid on, alone could meet the deserts of one guilty of bringing ghostly visitors into discredit, because, should such practices continue, no ghost, even one who came to tell of buried treasure, would be sure of his—or her—reception, and might be scoffed at as an impostor, instead of being received with terror, and the fearful knocking together of knees.

But mostly the general opinion was in favour of the boy and his flight; the folk rejoiced that Mathew had met his match; and our ignorance of Ralph's fate made the people remember once more his many good qualities, his merry friendliness, his honest face, and his blithe brown eyes, in spite of the ghost pretences and the stories spread abroad by his cousins.

"That," said my grandmother in answer to Mathew, "was wrong, indeed. I had hoped that the lad would have returned, made submission, received punishment, and been pardoned. He was ever a boy of good disposition, and his uncle loved him, Mathew—a thing which did without doubt prepossess you in his favour."

Mathew slowly put down his empty

glass, and held up both hands to show astonishment.

"Good disposition? This, madam, springs from your own goodness of heart. Who doth not know in Warkworth that the boy was already, so to speak, a man grown, so far as wickedness is concerned? He of a good disposition? Alas, madam, your heart is truly too full of kindness! For the sake of Missy here—who grows a tall lass—I am glad that he is gone, because he would have taught her some of his own wickedness. Alas!" here he spread his hands, "the things that I could tell you if I would. But one must spare one's cousin. Greediness, laziness, profligacy, luxury. Ha! But I speak not of these matters, because he was my cousin. For his own sake, and because at his age an evil-disposed boy cannot but feel the want of those paternal corrections which I never spared, I grieve that he is no longer with us."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Mathew," said my grandmother, smiling, "I cannot believe, even though you assure us, that Ralph was so wicked as all this, and I hope, for the credit of your family, that you will diligently spread abroad a better opinion. No one is hardened at sixteen."

"Except Ralph," said Mathew, shaking his head.

"And I for one shall continue to hope the best. He will return to us, Mr. Mathew, before long, penitent, and desirous of pleasing his guardian, and you will then be able to correct your judgment."

"I do not think he will ever return," said his cousin. "As for being penitent, he must first take the punishment which awaits him. As for desiring to please—" He stopped short, doubtless remembering that alder-branch.

"If he does not return," my grandmother continued, "till after he becomes of age, it will be your great happiness to hand over his property, well husbanded and with careful stewardship." Here Mathew shut both his eyes and shook his head, but I know not why. "You will feel the pleasure of doing good to one who undutifully offered you violence. He will be the opposite to the man in the parable, for he will have left his talent tied up in a napkin, and he will return and find it multiplied."

"Such as Ralph," said Mathew grimly, "do not repent, nor desire to please, nor return. He began with penance—public penance—think upon that—and saying the

Lord's Prayer aloud. He will be advanced next—which is the regular course of such as him—to pillory. After penance, pillory. It is the regular thing. After pillory, stocks; after stocks, whipping-post or cart-tail; after cart-tail, burning in the hand. Lastly, he will be promoted to the gallows." He positively rubbed his hands together, and laughed at this delightful prospect. Why did he wish his cousin hanged, I wonder, unless that he would then get the mill?

"I trust not," said the Dame. "Mean-time, you will guard his property."

"His property!" his face grew quite black, "his property! Why, if he comes back there will be something said about that as well. Ha! His property! Ha!"

"But, surely, Mr. Mathew, his uncle bequeathed Morwick Mill to Ralph."

"That, madam, has been the belief of the world. Nevertheless—— But I say nothing. This is not the time for serious talk."

When he was gone, my grandmother, who seldom discussed such high matters with me, said:

"Drusilla, I like it not. Doth Mathew Humble desire the death of his cousin? It would seem so. Pillory, stocks, whipping-post, gallows? All for our Ralph? Why this passeth understanding! And wherefore this talk of the world's belief? I like it not, child."

"But you do not think, grandmother, that Ralph will——"

"I think, child, that Ralph is a good lad, but headstrong, perhaps, and impatient of control. Wherever he is I will warrant him honest. Such boys get on, as your father got on. Some day, I make no doubt that he will return. But as for Mathew Humble, I like not his manner of speech."

The same day she put on her bonnet and best shawl and went to the house of Mr. Cuthbert Carnaby, from which I gathered—my little wits jumping as fast as bigger ones—that she went to lay the case before his Worship, which perhaps was the reason why, when Mr. Carnaby next met Mathew (it was after church on Sunday), he informed him that it should be his own business to watch that the mill and farm were properly managed in the interests of the heir, and that a strict account would be required when Ralph returned and came of age. Whereat Mathew became confused, and stammered words incoherent about proving who was

the rightful heir. Yet, for the moment, nothing more was said upon that subject.

The summer and the autumn passed, but no sign or letter came from Ralph. The people in the town ceased, after the manner of mankind, to think of the boy. He was gone and forgotten, yet there were two or three of us who spoke and thought of him continually. First there was the Fugleman, who found his life dull without the boy to talk with. He promised to make a collection of bird's eggs in the spring as a present for him when he should return. Then there was the old woman, Sailor Nan, who kept his memory green. Lastly, there were my grandmother and myself. We knew not, however, where he was, or anything about him, nor could we guess what he was doing, or whither he had gone.

Twice in the year, namely at Christmas or the New Year, and at Midsummer, I had letters from my parents, to which I duly replied. It was in May when Ralph ran away, so that they had three letters from me that year. When my Christmas letters arrived there was mention of our boy, but so strange a tale that we could not understand what to believe or what the thing might mean.

The letter told us that Ralph reached London safely in four or five weeks after leaving us, having walked all the way, save for such trifling lifts and helps as might be had for nothing on the road; he found out my father's shop; he gave him the letter; he slept in the house, and was hospitably entertained. In the morning he was taken by my father to the East India Company's great house in Cornhill, and left there by him, to talk with a gentleman about the obtaining of a post in their service; that, the conversation finished, being dismissed by the gentleman with whom he had taken counsel, Ralph left the office. Then he disappeared, and was seen no more. Nor to the enquiries made was there any answer given or any news of him ascertained. "So wicked is this unhappy town," wrote my mother, "that men are capable of murdering even an innocent lad from the country for the sake of the silver buckles, or the very coat upon his back. Yet there are other ways in which he may have been drawn away. He loved not the thought of city life; he may have taken the Recruiting Sergeant's Shilling, or he may have been pressed for a sailor and sent to sea; or, which Heaven forbid,

he may have been decoyed into bad company, and now be in the company of rogues. Whatever the cause, he hath disappeared and made no sign. Yet he seemed a good and honest lad."

So perplexed were we with the strange and unintelligible intelligence that, after turning it about in talk for a week, it was resolved that we would consult Mr. Carnaby in the matter. It would perhaps have been better if we had kept the thing to ourselves. For this gentleman, though he kindly considered the case, could do nothing to remove the dreadful doubt under which we lay, except that he recommended us to patience and resignation, virtues of which, Heaven knows! we women who stay at home must needs continually practice. We should, I say, have done better had we held our tongues, because Mr. Carnaby told the barber, who told the townsfolk one by one, and then it was whispered about that Ralph had joined the gipsies, according to some; or been pressed and sent to sea, according to others; or had enlisted, according to others; with wild stories told in addition, born of imagination, idle or malignant, as that he had joined a company of common rogues and robbers; or—but I scorn to repeat these things. Everybody, however, at this juncture, remembered the wicked things said of the boy by his cousin. As for Mathew himself, overjoyed at the welcome news, which he received open-mouthed, so to speak, he went about calling all his acquaintance to witness that he had long since prophesied ruin and disaster to the boy, which, indeed, to the fullest extent, a lad so depraved as to horsewhip his own guardian, richly deserved. As for coming back, he said that was not likely, and, indeed, impossible, because he was already knocked on the head—Mathew was quite convinced of this—in some midnight brawl, or at least fallen so low that he would never dare to return among respectable people. These things we could not believe, yet they sank into our hearts and made us uneasy. For where could the boy be, and why did he not send us one letter, at least, to tell us what he had done, and how he had fared?

"Child," said my grandmother, "it is certain that Mathew does not wish his cousin to return. He bears malice in his heart against the boy, and he remembers that should he never come back the mill will be his own." Already he began to give himself the airs of the master, and to talk

of selling a field here and a field there, and of improving the property, as if all was his.

"He will come back," said the Fugleman. "Brave hearts and lusty legs do not get killed. Maybe he hath enlisted. Then he may have gone a soldiering to America, or somewhere in the world, and no doubt will get promotion—aye, corporal first, sergeant next, and perhaps be made Fugleman. Or maybe, as your lady mother says, he hath been pressed, and is now at sea, so that he cannot write. But, wherever he is, be sure he is doing well. Wherefore, heart up!"

Well, to shorten the story, we got no news at all, and could never discover, for many years, what had become of the boy. When four years had passed by without a word or line from him, Mathew grew horribly afraid because Ralph's one-and-twentieth birthday drew near, and he thought the time was come when the heir would appear and claim his own. What preparations he made to receive him I know not. Perhaps a blunderbuss and a cup of poison. But the day passed, and there was no sign of Ralph. Then, indeed, Mathew became quite certain that he would no more be disturbed and that the mill was his own.

As for myself, I sat at home chiefly with my grandmother, who was now beginning to grow old, yet brisk and notable still. There was a great deal to be done, and the days pass swiftly to industrious hands; yet not one so busy and not one so swift but I could find time to think and to pray for Ralph. As for diversions, for those who want them, there are plenty. Do not think that in our little north-country town we have any cause to envy the pleasures of town. Why, to begin with, there are the mummers at Christmas; all through the dark evenings the lads gamble at candle creel for the stable-lanterns; on New Year's Eve we sit up all night long and keep the fire burning—it is dreadful bad luck to borrow fire on a New Year's morning; in the summer there comes the fair; on Sunday afternoons, for the young men, there is wrestling, with quarter-staff and cock-fighting. At harvest-time there is the March of the Kirn baby—

The master's corn is ripe and shorn,
We bless the day that he was born;
Shouting a kirn—a kirn—a ho!

with the feast afterwards and the cushion-dance, at which the old song of "Prinkam Prankam" is always sung, and the girls are kissed, a proceeding which seems never to

fail in causing the liveliest satisfaction to the men, though why they should wish to kiss young persons for whom they do not feel any affection, and perhaps, even, any respect, passes my poor comprehension. I have seen, on these occasions, a gentleman kiss a dairymaid, and dissemble so well, that one might say he liked it. Besides these amusements, the men had the excitement of the smuggling, whereof you will hear more presently.

To look back upon, in spite of these amusements, it was a long and dreary time of waiting. Yet still the Fugleman kept up my heart, and Sailor Nan swore, as if she was still Captain of the Foretop, that he would come home safe. I was young, happily, and youth is the time for hope. And about the end of the sixth year I had cause to think about other things, because my own misfortunes began.

I had long observed in the letters of my dear parents a certain difference, which constantly caused doubt and questioning; for my mother exhorted me continually, in every letter, to the practice of frugality, thrift, simple living, and the acquisition of housewifely knowledge, and, in short, all those virtues which especially adorn the condition of poverty. She also never failed to bid me reflect upon the uncertainty of human affairs and the instability of fortune; and every letter furnished examples of rich men become poor, and great ladies reduced to beg their bread. My grandmother bade me lay these things to heart, and I perceived that she was disturbed, and she would have written to my father to ask if things were going ill, but for two reasons. The first was that she could neither read nor write, those arts not having been taught her in her childhood; and I testify that she was none the worse for want of them, but her natural shrewdness even increased, because she had to depend upon herself, and could not still be running to a book for guidance. The second reason was that the letters of my father, both to her and to myself, were full of glorious anticipation and confidence. Yes; while my mother wrote in sadness, he wrote in triumph; when she bade me learn to scour pots, he commanded me to study the fashions; when she prophesied disaster, he proclaimed good fortune. Thus, he ordered that I was to be taught whatever could be learned in so remote a town as Warkworth, and that especial care was to be taken in my carriage and demeanour, begging my grandmother to observe the deportment of

Mistress Carnaby, and to bid me copy her as an example; for, he said, a city heiress not uncommonly married with a gentleman of good family, though impoverished fortunes; that some city heiresses had of late married noblemen; that as he had no son, nor any other child but myself, I would inherit the whole of his vast fortune (I thought how I could give it all to Ralph), and, therefore, I must study how to maintain myself in the position which I should shortly occupy; that he was already of the Common Council, and looked before long to be made Alderman, after which it was but a step to Sheriff first and Lord Mayor afterwards; that he intended to build or buy a great house worthy of his wealth; and that he did not wish me to return home until such time as this house was in readiness, because, as one might truly say, his present dwelling in Cheapside, though convenient for his business, and the place where his fortune was made, was but a poor place, quite unworthy of an heiress, and he should wish that I should be seen nowhere until he had prepared a fitting place for my reception; that, in point of beauty, he hoped and doubted not that I should be able to set off and adorn the jewels and fine dresses which he designed presently to give me; and that he desired me especially to pay very particular attention not to seem quite rustical and country-bred, and to remember that the common speech of Northumberland would raise a laugh in London. With much more to the same effect.

I say not that my father wrote all this in a single letter, but in several, so that all these things became implanted in my mind, and both my grandmother and myself were, in spite of my mother's letters, firmly persuaded that we were already very rich and considerable people, and that my father was a merchant of the greatest renown—already a Common Councilman, and shortly to be Alderman, Sheriff, and Lord Mayor—in the city of London. This belief was also held by our neighbours and friends, and it gave my grandmother, who was, besides, a lady of dignified manners, more consideration than she would otherwise have obtained, with the title of Madam, which was surely due to the mother of so great and successful a man.

Now the truth was this: my father was the most sanguine of men, and the most ready to deceive himself. He lived continually (if I may presume to say so without breaking the fifth commandment) in a fool's

paradise. When he was a boy nothing would do for him but he must go to London, refusing to till the acres which would afterwards be his own, because he was ambitious, and ardently desired to be another Whittington. See the dangers of the common Chap books, in which he had read the story of this great Lord Mayor! He so far resembled Whittington that he went up to London (by waggon from Newcastle) with little in his pocket, except a letter of recommendation from the then Vicar of Warkworth to his brother, at the time a glover in Cheapside. How he became apprentice—like Whittington—to this glover, how he fell in love—like Whittington—with his master's daughter, how he married her—like Whittington—and inherited the business, stock, capital, goodwill and all, may here only be thus briefly told; but by the death of his master he became actual and sole owner of a London shop, whereupon, my poor father's brain being always full of visions, he was inflamed with the confidence that now, indeed, he had nothing to look for but the making of an immense fortune. Worse than this, he thought that the fortune would come of its own accord. How a man living in the city of London could make so prodigious a mistake I know not. Therefore he left the whole care of the business to his wife and his apprentices, and for his own part spent the day in coffee-houses or on 'Change, or wherever merchants and traders meet together. This made him full of great talk, and he presently proceeded to imagine that he himself was concerned in the great ventures and enterprises of which he heard so much; or, perhaps, because he could not actually have thought himself a merchant adventurer, he believed that before long he also should be embarking cargoes to the East and West Indies, running under convoy of frigates safe through the enemy's privateers. It was out of the profits of these imaginary cargoes that he was to obtain that vast wealth of which he continually thought and talked until, in the end, he believed that he possessed it. Meantime his poor wife, my mother, left in charge of the shop, and with her household cares as well, found, to her dismay, that the respectable business which her father had made was quickly falling from them, as their old friends died, one by one, or retired from trade, and no new ones coming in their places; for, as I have been credibly in-

formed, the business of a tradesman or merchant in London is so precarious and uncertain, that, unless it be constantly watched, pushed, nursed, encouraged, coaxed, fed, and flattered, it presently withers away and perishes.

For want of the master's presence, for lack of pushing and encouragement, the yearly returns of the shop grew less and less. No one knew this except my mother. It was useless to tell my father. If she begged his attention to the fact, he only said that business was, in the nature of things, fluctuating; that a bad year would be succeeded by a good year; that large profits had recently been made by traders to Calicut and Surinam, where he had designs of employing his own capital, and that ventures to Canton had of late proved extremely successful. Alas, poor man! he had no capital left, for now all was gone—capital, credit, and custom. Yet he still continued to believe that his shop, the shop which came to him with his wife, was bringing him, every year, a great and steady return, and that he was amassing a fortune.

One day—it was a Saturday evening in May—in the year seventeen hundred and seventy, six years after the Flight of Ralph Embleton, when I was in my seventeenth year, and almost grown to my full height, I saw coming slowly along the narrow road which leads from the highway to Warkworth a country cart, and in it two persons, the driver walking at the horse's head. I stood at the garden-gate watching this cart idly, and the setting sun behind it, without so much as wondering who these persons might be, until presently it came slowly down the road, which here slopes gently to the river and the bridge, and pulled up in front of our gate. When the cart stopped a lady got quickly down and seized my hands.

"You are my Drusilla?" she asked, and without waiting for a reply, because she was my mother and knew I could be no other than her own daughter, she fell upon my neck in a passion of weeping and sobbing, saying that she knew I was her daughter dear, and that she was my most unhappy ruined mother. It was my father who descended after her. He advanced with dignified step and the carriage of one in authority. I observed that his linen and the lace of his ruffles were of the very finest, and his coat, though dusty, of the finest broadcloth. He seemed not to perceive my mother's tears; he kissed me and

gave me his blessing. He bade the carter, with majestic air, lead the "coach"—he called the country cart a coach—and take great care of the horse, which he said was worth forty guineas if a penny; but the horse was a ten-year-old cart-horse, worth at most four guineas, as I knew very well, because I knew the carrier.

Amazed at this extraordinary behaviour, I led my parents to my grandmother, and then we presently learned the truth. My father, if you please, was ruined; he was a bankrupt; his schemes of greatness had come to nothing; his vast fortune lay in his imagination only; he had lost his wife's money and his own. He had returned to his native county, his old friends having slubbed together and made a little purse for him, and his creditors having consented to accept what they could get and to give him a quittance in full, because he was known to be a man of integrity; otherwise he might have been lodged in gaol, where many an unfortunate, yet honest, man lieth in misery.

The disaster was more than my father's brain could bear. Nothing more dreadful can happen to a merchant and one in trade, than to become a bankrupt. To lose his money is bad, but many a man loses his all, yet does not become bankrupt, and so saves his credit. A merchant's credit is for him what his honour is to a soldier, his piety to a divine, her virtue to a woman, his skill to a craftsman. My father, I say, could not bear it. First, as soon as he fairly understood what had happened, he fell into a lethargy, sitting in a chair all day in silence, and desiring nothing but to be left alone. After a while the lethargy changed into a restlessness, and he must needs be up and doing something—it mattered not what. Then the restlessness disappeared and he became again his old self, as cheerful, as sanguine, as confident, with no other change than a more settled dignity of bearing, caused by the belief, the complete delusion, that now his fortune was indeed made; that he possessed boundless wealth, and that he was going to leave London and to retire into the country, as many great merchants used to do, in order to enjoy it.

He was perfectly reasonable on all other points; he could talk on politics or on religion, on London matters, on the affairs of Warkworth, or on the interests of the farmers; but always on the assumption of his own wealth. The broad fields everywhere he believed to be his own. If he

came with me, as he often did, when I milked the cow, fed the pigs and the chickens, made the bread, brewed the beer, or turned the churn, he laughed at what he was pleased to call the condescension of his hairess in doing this menial work, and called me his pretty shepherdess. And sometimes he entertained me with stories of how his fortune was made. Chiefly I found his imagination ran upon Canton, with trade in tea and silk.

"It is very well known," he would say, "that those who venture in the Greek seas and the Levant run very heavy risks; they are more dangerous, my dear child, than many places much farther away. I considered the Levant trade carefully, before embarking my money in foreign ventures. I was always prudent, perhaps too prudent. Yet the end hath justified me. Eh, Drusilla, hath not the end justified me? Why, I have known a man on 'Change worth this day a plum—a round plum, child—and to-morrow not half that sum, by reason of losses in the treacherous Levant. But, alas! there are perils in every sea. Tempests and hurricanes arise; there are hidden rocks; there are fires at sea; ships are becalmed—all these things we call the Hand of God; there are also pirates everywhere; they lurk in the Mahometan ports of Morocco, Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis; they hide in the fever-smitten harbours of Madagascar—but men born to be hanged laugh at fever; they abound in the West Indies and in the Narrow Seas. We are always at war with some great power, and therefore we have privateers to dread; these, my dear, are more desperate and blood-thirsty villains even than your murderous pirates. And there is danger from mutiny aboard, whereby friends of my own—substantial men, mark you, on 'Change—have lost many a noble ship and precious cargo. We on 'Change think nothing of these chances; we are on the mountains one day and in the depths the next. Yet, like the good old country to which we belong, we weather the storm, and in the end grow rich. Rich? Drusilla, my child, we grow enormously rich. The Earl of Northumberland himself, with all his acres, is not so rich as your father."

My mother spoke of him, when he was not present, with a bitterness which grieved me sore. But I knew not the trouble she had had, and the long anticipation of this trouble. It appeared, indeed, as if a sound, though modest, business, with the certainty of a competence, had been thrown away and

wasted for want of a little—only a little forethought and care. My father, at the best, was only a simple glover with a small shop and two apprentices. What could a poor lad from Northumberland expect more? All that a woman can do my mother had done. But in trade a woman can do but little. She can serve, but she cannot go about and make trade—she cannot persuade Merchant Adventurers to load their ships with her wares. Yet, even with the memory of her wrongs, and her ruined hopes, she was always gentle and forbearing in the presence of her afflicted husband, careful to keep him happy in his delusion, and tender with him, so that he should never feel the mischief he had done.

As for our means, I dared not ask. But presently I learned that all we had was the annuity of forty pounds a year, which would terminate with my grandmother's death, the cottage in which we lived, and a slender stock of money, I knew not how much, in my mother's hands.

Alas! this was the end of my splendid hopes—of my father's triumphant letters! I was indeed an heiress!

CHAPTER VI. THE LETTER AT LAST.

ONE must accept without murmuring the ordinance of Providence. Murmuring avails nothing and cannot restore things lost. The Hand which gives also takes away. The loss of that fortune, which I knew only by hearsay, and expected without eagerness, affected me but little in comparison with the burden of two more to keep upon our forty pounds a year. I saw clearly that I must for henceforth rise early and work late, and no more eat any bread of idleness. We had a servant, but we now sent her away, my mother and I doing all the house-work. In addition, I fed the poultry and milked the cow.

The good old Fugleman came every day as soon as he heard of our misfortunes and understood that I could no more go to the castle of an afternoon, and became of very great service indeed, for he kept the garden for us, and talked with my father, who, to be sure, was best out of the house, where he was only in our way. He also—which was kind of him—took the management of the pigs. And I must also confess my great obligations to Mrs. Carnaby, who, understanding the straits into which we were fallen, was so good as to send me and persuade other ladies of this part of the county to send me fine work to do, by means of which I earned a little money,

which went into the common purse and was useful. My mother wept to think that I must rise at five, and, after doing the house-work and the outdoor work, making butter and sending it away to be sold with eggs and cream-cheese and other little things—it was not much we got, but something—to be compelled to sit down in the afternoon to my needle, and work till nine at night. But I was a tall strong girl; work did me no harm. I should have been happy but that I saw my grandmother grow daily weaker. She sickened and began to fail when she saw her son, of whom she was so proud, return a beggar to his native county, and when she heard his poor deluded talk. A grievous sight it was to see the poor old lady, once so strong and active, sit feeble in her chair by the fireside, while her sad eyes followed her son as he proudly walked to and fro in the room and told the tale of his investments and his wealth. Sometimes I noted how my mother looked wistfully upon this spectacle of age and decay, and saw how her mouth worked and her lips moved, and knew well that she was saying to herself, "When she dies, what next?" And then I was fain to go away into the garden, where they could not hear me, and cry over troubles of the present and fears of the future which seemed hard to be borne.

"Don't cry, Miss Drusy"—yet the good old Fugleman looked as if he, too, would willingly shed a tear—"don't cry; think to yourself that when the boy comes home all will go well again. Merry as a wedding-bell shall we be then."

"Ah, when—when?"

We had two visitors who came often. One of them was his Worship Mr. Cuthbert Carnaby. He came, he said, in order to profit by the experience and conversation of my father.

"I know, child," he said, "and greatly commiserate, the disorder of his brain, yet I cannot but marvel at the extent of his knowledge, the justice of his remarks, and the weight of his opinion. It is indeed a marvel to me that one so richly endowed by Providence with understanding should have so conspicuously failed in the business of his life, which was to grow rich."

I take pleasure in quoting the testimony of so eminent an authority to the great qualities possessed by my unfortunate father, and it did one good to see them walking in the garden, my father bearing himself with the deference due to a

gentleman of good old family, yet expecting equal deference to himself as a man of great success and wealth, and both arguing on the politics and the conduct of affairs with as much gravity as two plenipotentiaries or ambassadors extraordinary.

Strange it was, indeed, to think that one was mad who could converse so rationally, with such just estimate of things, with so true a knowledge of their proportion, so vast a fund of information as to the state of trade all over the world, the value of gold, the balance of profit, the growth of industries; yea, and even the power and prospects of foreign states with their wants and their dangers. Or that one could be mad who could set forth with such lucidity the foundation of our Christian faith, and the arguments for the doctrines taught in our churches. He was not only sane, but he was a man worth listening to on all subjects—save one. For he was fully possessed with the idea that he was as wealthy as he had ever desired to be. His poor brain was turned, indeed, on this point, and after a while I thought little of it, because we became accustomed to it, and because it seemed a harmless craze. Yet it was not harmless, as you will hear. Indeed, even an innocent babe in arms may be made the instrument of mischief in the hands of a wicked man.

Our second visitor was Mathew Humble. He came first, he said, to pay his respects to my father. Then he began to come with great regularity. But I perceived soon, for I was no longer a child, but already a woman, that he had quite another object in view, for he cast his eyes upon me in such a way as no woman can mistake. Even to look upon those eyes of his made me turn sick with loathing. Why, if this man had been another Apollo for beauty I would not have regarded him; and so far was he from an Apollo that a fat and loathsome Satyr more nearly resembled him.

He was already three or four and thirty, which I, being seventeen, regarded as a very great age indeed; and most Northumbrian folk are certainly married and the fathers of children already tall before that time.

He was a man who made no friends, and lived alone with his sister Barbara. No girl at all, so far as I know, could boast of having received any attentions from him; he was supposed to care for nothing except money and strong drink. Every evening he sat by himself in the room which over-

looks the river, with account-books before him, and drank usquebaugh. But he loved brandy as well, or Hollands, or rum, or indeed anything which was strong. And being naturally short of stature he was grown fat and gross, with red hanging cheeks, which made his small eyes look smaller and more pig-like, a double chin, and a nose which already told a tale of deep potations, so red and swollen was it. What girl of seventeen could regard with favour—even if there were no image of a brave and comely boy already impressed upon her heart—such a man as this, a mere tosspot and a drinker? And, worst of all, a secret and solitary drinker—a gloomy drinker.

It was strange that, about the time when Ralph's disappearance was first heard of, rumours ran about the town that perhaps the mill would turn out, after all, to be the property of Mathew Humble; that these rumours were revived at the approach of Ralph's twenty-first birthday; and that again, when Mathew first began his approaches to me, the rumour was again circulated. By the help of the Fugleman I traced these rumours to the barber; and, still with his help—because every man must be shaved, and, while being shaved, must talk—I traced these to none other than Mathew himself. He had, then, some object to gain; I knew not what at the time. Later on I discovered that his design was to make it appear—should Ralph ever return—that I had taken him for a husband when I thought he was the actual master and owner of all; for I believe he allowed himself no doubt as to the result of his offers. Doth it not seem as if the uglier, the older, the less attractive a man is, whether in person or in mind, the more certain he becomes of conquering a woman's heart?

The rumour on this occasion was more certain and distinct than before. It was now stated that Mr. Embleton was discovered to have made a later will, which had been proved, and was ready to be produced if necessary; that in this will the testator, after deploring the badness of heart manifested by his nephew Ralph, devised the whole of his property to his nephew Mathew. The barber, for his part, had no doubt of the truth of this report; but those who asked Mathew whether it was true, received mysterious answers, as that time would show; that in this world no one should be certain of anything; that many is the slip between cup and lip; that should an occasion arise

the truth of the story would be tested; such oracles as incline the hearers to believe all that has been said—and more. Barbara, his sister, for her own part, showed great willingness to answer any questions which might be put to her. But she knew little; her brother, she said, was a close man, who sat much alone and spoke little.

And then the Fugleman told me a very strange story indeed, and one which seemed to bode no good to any of us. By this time I so regarded Mathew that I could not believe he could do or design aught but evil. This was wrong, but he was most certainly a man of very evil disposition.

His own private business, the Fugleman told me—this was nothing in the world, as I very well knew, but the snaring of rabbits, hares, partridges, and other game on the banks of the river—led him sometimes past Morwick Mill, in the evening or late at night. There was a room in the mill—the same room in which Mathew was vanquished and beaten—the window of which looked out upon the river, which is here a broad and shallow brook. The bank rises steep on the other side, and is clothed with thick hanging woods in which no one ever walked except the Fugleman, and he, for those purposes I have just mentioned, always alone and after sundown. Now his eyes were like unto the eyes of a hawk; they knew not distance; they could see, quite far off, little things as well as great things; and the Fugleman saw, night after night, that Mathew Humble was sitting locked up in his room, engaged in writing or copying something. I believe that if the Fugleman had known how to read, he would have read the writing even across the river. Unhappily, he had never learned that art. Mathew was making a copy, the Fugleman said, of some other document. But what that document was he could not tell. It was something on large sheets of paper, and in big handwriting. He wrote very slowly, comparing word for word with the papers which he seemed copying. Once when there was a noise as of someone at the door, he huddled all the papers together, and bundled them away in a corner quickly and with an affrighted air. He was therefore doing something secret, which means something wicked. What could it be?

"Little he thinks," said the Fugleman, "that Master Ralph is sure to come home and confound his knavish tricks, and trip

up his heels for him. Ah, I think I see him now, in lace ruffles and good broadcloth, walking up the street with a fine City Madam on his arm."

I should have been very well contented with the lace ruffles and good broadcloth—indeed, I asked for nothing better—but I wanted no fine City Madam at the mill.

Later on I learned what this thing was which he took so long to copy, and which gave him so much anxiety. But it was like a fire-ship driven back by the wind among the vessels of those who sent it forth.

One morning when I was busy in the kitchen with household work, and my mother was engaged upon the family sewing, Mathew came and begged to have some conversation with her. He said that, first of all, he was fully acquainted with her circumstances, and the unhappy outlook before her, when my grandmother should die and leave us all without any income at all; that, being of a compassionate heart, he was strongly minded to help them; and that the best way, as well as he could judge, would be to make her daughter Drusilla his wife. This done, he would then see that their later years would be attended with comfort and the relief of all anxiety.

At first my mother did not reply. She had no reason to love Mathew, whose unkindness to his ward was well known to her. Again, she had still some remains of family pride left—you do not destroy a woman's pride by taking away her money. She thought, being the daughter of a well-to-do London citizen, that her child should look higher than a man who had nothing in the world of his own but thirty acres of land, although he lived at the mill and pretended to be its owner. And she very truly thought that the man was not in person likely to attract so young a girl as myself. But she spoke him fair. She told him that I was young as yet, too young to know my own mind, and that perhaps he had better wait. He replied that he was not young, for his own part, and that he would not wait. Then she told him that she should not, certainly, force the inclinations of her daughter, but that she would speak to me about him.

She opened the subject to me in the evening. No sooner did I understand that Mathew had spoken for me than I threw myself upon my knees to my mother, and implored her with many tears and protestations not to urge me to accept his suit. I declared

with vehemence, that if there were no other man in the world, I could not accept Mathew Humble. I reminded her of his behaviour towards Ralph. I assured her that I believed him to be one who sat drinking by himself, and a plotter of evil, a man with a hardened heart and a dead conscience.

Well, my mother shed tears with me, and said that I should not be married against my will; that Mathew was not a good man, and that she would bid him, not uncourteously, go look elsewhere. This she did, thanking him for the honour he had proposed.

For some reason, perhaps because he did not really wish to marry me, perhaps because he had not thoroughly laid out the scheme of marrying me to revenge himself upon Ralph, Mathew gave me a respite for the time, though I went in great terror lest he might pester my mother or myself. Perhaps, which I think more likely, he trusted to the influence of poverty and privation, and was contented to wait till these should make me submissive to his will.

However that may be, he said nothing more concerning love, and continued his visits to my father, in whose conversation he took so great a pleasure. Oh, villain!

Things were in this posture, I being in the greatest anxiety and fear that something terrible was going before long to happen to us, when a most joyful and unexpected event happened.

It was in the month of May, seven years since Ralph's flight—like the followers of Mohammed, I reckoned the years from the Flight—that this event happened.

The event was this, that the Fugleman had a letter sent to him—the first letter he ever received in his life.

I saw the post-boy riding down the road early in the afternoon; he passed by the house of Mr. Carnaby, where he sometimes stopped, past our cottage, where he never stopped because there was nobody who wrote letters to us, and over the bridge, his horse's hoofs clattering under the old gateway. I thought he was going to the vicarage, but he left that on his right and rode straight up the street, blowing his horn as he went. I wondered, but had no time to waste in wonder, who was going to get a letter in that part of the town. The letter, in fact, was for no other than the Fugleman.

Half an hour later the Fugleman, who had been at work in the garden all the

morning, came down the town again, and asked me—with respect to her ladyship, my mother—if I would give him five minutes' talk. With him was Sailor Nan, cause the thing was altogether so strange that he could not avoid telling her about it, and she came with him, curious as a woman, though bold and brave as becomes an old salt.

"'Tis a strange thing," said the Fugleman, turning the unopened letter over and over in his hand; "'tis a strange thing; here is a letter which tells me I know not what—comes from I know not where. I have paid three shillings and eightpence for it. A great sum. I doubt I was a fool. It may mean money, and it may mean loss."

"Burn it, and ha' done," said Sailor Nan. "'Tis from some land-shark. Burn the letter."

"I am sixty, or mayhap seventy years of age. Sixty, I must a-be. Yes; sure and certain, sixty. Yet never a letter in all my days before."

Now, which is very singular, not the least suspicion in our minds as to the writer of the letter.

"Is it," I asked, "from a cousin or a brother?"

"Cousin?" he repeated, with the shadow of a smile across his stiff lips. "Why, I never had a father or a mother, to say nothing of a brother or a cousin. When I first remember anything, I was running in the streets with other boys. We stole our breakfast, we stole our dinner, and we stole our supper. Where are they all now, those little rogues and pickpockets, my companions? Hanged, I doubt not. What but hanging can have come to them? But as for me, by the blessing of the Lord, I was enlisted in the Fourteenth Line, and after a few hundreds taken mostly by three dozen doses, which now are neither here nor there, and are the making of a lad, I was flogged into a good soldier, and so rose as was due to merit. A hearty three dozen, now and then, laid on with a will in the cool of the morning, works miracles. Not such a regiment in the service as the Fourteenth. And why? Because the colonel knew his duty and did it without fear or favour, and the men were properly trounced. Good comrades all, and brave boys. And where are they? Dead, I take it; beggars, some; fallen in action, some; broke, some; in comfortable berths, like me, some. If all were living, who would there be to send

me a letter, seeing there wasn't a man in all the regiment who could write!"

Strange that not one of us even then guessed the truth.

It was a great letter, thick and carefully sealed, addressed to "Fugleman Furlong, At his room in the Castle of Warkworth, Northumberland, England." It came from foreign parts, and the paper was not only stained, but had a curious fragrance.

I broke the seal and tore open the covering of the letter. Within was another packet. Oh, Heavens! It was addressed to "Drusilla Hetherington, care of the Fugleman, to be forwarded without delay. Haste—post haste!"

And then I knew without waiting to open the letter that it would be from none other than Ralph. It must be from Ralph. After all these years, we were to hear once more from Ralph. I stood pale and trembling, nor could I for some moments even speak. At last I said:

"Fugleman—Nan—this letter is addressed to me. It is, I verily believe, from Ralph Embleton. Wait a little, while I read it."

"Read it—read it!" cried the old man.

Could I—ah! merciful Heaven—could I ever forget the rapture, the satisfied yearning, the blissful content, the gratitude, with which I read that sweet and precious letter? They waited patiently; even the rude and coarse old woman refrained from speech, while I read page after page. They said nothing though they saw the tears falling down my face, because they knew that they were tears of happiness.

After seven long years, my Ralph was talking to me as he used to talk. I knew his voice, I recognised his old imperious way, I saw that he had not changed. As if he would ever change!

When I had finished and dried my tears they begged me to read his letter to them.

"MY DEAR, DEAR GIRL"—I told them that I could not, indeed, read all, but that I would read them what I could; and this was the beautiful beginning, in order that I should know at the outset, so thoughtful he was, and for fear of my being anxious on the point, that he loved me still, and had never forgotten me. "My dear, dear Girl,—It is now six years since I bade you farewell at your garden-gate and started upon my journey to London. Your father has doubtless told you how I presented myself and with what kindness he received me. I am very sure that you have not forgotten me, and I hope that you will

rejoice to hear of my good fortune"—Hope, indeed! Could he not be sure?—

"I have no doubt also that he hath informed you of the strange good fortune which befell me after he left me at the East India Company's House, of which I told him by letter and special messenger, to whom I gave, to ensure speed and safe delivery, one shilling." (But it would appear that this wicked messenger broke his word, and took the shilling, but did nothing for it—a common thief, who deserved to be hanged, like many another no more wicked than himself. Oh! what punishment too great for this breach of trust, small as it seemed! See, now, what a world of trouble was caused by that little theft.) "It was

truly by special Providence that, while Mr. Silvertop talked with me, the great Captain who won the Battle of Plassy should have been standing near and should have overheard what passed. When I was bidden go my ways for a foolish boy (because I did not wish to be a writer) and waste his time no longer, I was much cast down, for now I began to fear that I must, like the most of mankind, take what was assigned to me by Providence rather than what I would like. And I could plainly see that there remained only one choice for me; namely, I must return to the hated rule of my cousin who would keep me as a plough-boy as long as he could, or I must betake me to the task of sweeping out and serving a shop. And yet, what shop? But who would employ me? Therefore, I hung my head and stood irresolute without the Company's house. Now, presently, the gentleman whom I had seen within came forth with another officer, brave in scarlet. He saw me standing sadly beside the posts, and inspired by that noble generosity which has always distinguished this great man, he clapped his hand upon my shoulder.

"So," he said, "you are the lad who loves a sword better than a pen?"

"If it please your honour," I replied.

"A sword means peril to life and limb," he said sternly; "he who goes a fighting in India must expect hard fare, rough sleeping, rude knocks. He must be ever on the watch against treachery. He must meet duplicity with equal cunning. He must obey blindly; he must never ask why; if he is sent to die like a rat in a hole, he must go without murmur or question. What! you think—do you?—that to carry a sword is to flaunt a scarlet coat before the ladies of St. James's?"

"'Nay, sir, with respect. I have read the lives of soldiers. I would willingly take the danger for the sake of the honour. But alas! I must stay at home and sweep a shop.'

"'What is thy birth, boy?'

"I told him that, and satisfied him on other points, including the reason of my flight, in which I trust that I was no more than truthful. Then he said:

"'I am Lord Clive,' and paused as if to know whether I had heard of him.

"You may be sure I was astonished, but I quickly doffed my hat and made him my best country-bred bow.

"'My lord,' I said 'we have heard, even in Northumberland, of Plassy.'

"'Good! I went to India as a writer—a miserable quill-driving writer. Think of that. What one man has done another may do. Now, boy, I sail this day for India. There will be more fighting, a great deal more fighting. If you please you shall go as a cadet with me. But there is no time to hesitate: I sail this day. Choose between the shop-sweeping and the musket. You will fight in the ranks at first, but if you behave well the sword will come after. Choose—peace and money-scraping at home like these smug-faced fat citizens,' he swept his hand with lordly contempt, 'or fighting and poverty, and perhaps death abroad. Choose.'

"'I humbly thank your lordship,' I said, 'I will follow you if you will condescend to take me.'

"Then he bade me go straight to Limehouse Pool, where I should find the ship at anchor. I was to take a note to the purser who would give me an outfit.

"Thus, my dear Drusilla, did I find my fortune and sail to foreign parts under as brave and great a Captain as this country will ever see.

"Our voyage lasted eleven months. There were three hundred raw recruits on board, mostly kidnapped or inveigled under false pretences by crimps and the scoundrels of Wapping. When they were first paraded, they were as beggarly looking a lot as you would wish to see, ragged, dirty, mutinous, and foul-mouthed. Yet in a couple of months, by daily drill, by good food and sea air, by moderate rations of rum, by sound flogging, by the continual discipline of the boatswain's rope's-end and the sergeant's rattan, the regimental supplejack, and the ship's cat-o'-nine-tails, they became as promising soldiers as one would wish. As for me, I stood with them in the

drill and did my best. Of course I could not expect his lordship to notice so humble a cadet as myself, but one evening, when we were near the end of our voyage, he sent for me and gave me a glass of wine, and kindly bade me be patient and of good cheer, because, he said, young gentlemen of merit and courage would be sure to find opportunities for distinction."

Ralph then went on to describe the life of a soldier in India, and to tell me—but this I leave out for fear of being tedious—how he received his commission and how he got promotion. It is sufficient to say that at the time he wrote, after six years of service, he held the commission of a captain. Nor was that all. He had been able to render such signal service to a certain Rajah, that this prince, who was not ungrateful, and hoped, besides, for more such services, took him one day into his treasure-house and bade him help himself to all if he pleased.

"My dear," he continued, "I knew not that the world contained so much treasure. Yet this Rajah is but a petty prince, and his wealth is as nothing compared with that of many others. There were diamonds in bags, uncut, whose worth I know not, and diamonds in rings, sword-handles, and women's gauds; there were rubies, emeralds, sapphires, turquoises, opals, and all kinds of precious stones strung rudely on common string as if they were but pebbles. There were also gold and silver vessels of all kinds, and there were casks full of gold coins. As I took out a handful I saw that many of them were ancient, with Greek characters, perhaps left in this country by that great soldier Alexander. When I had surveyed these wonders I thanked him, and said that I should not presume to take so much as a single gold coin from his treasure, but that if it should please his Highness to offer me a present, I should accept it with gratitude, provided it was not too costly. He laughed at these words, and when we came away I was so loaded with gold that I fancied myself already a rich man.

"Since this event it hath pleased Lord Clive to issue an order which prohibits officers from accepting henceforth any presents at all from the native princes. I cannot but feel grateful that the order was not issued before my own good fortune. Doubtless his Excellency hath good reasons for this order, which places the military service at a disadvantage compared with the writers, who have great opportunities of making fortunes;

and I cannot but think that it is a more noble thing to win a fortune at the point of the sword, than by such arts as are daily practised by the writers and civil servants of the Company. There are many Englishmen, and many Frenchmen as well—but we are driving them out of the country—who have become rich in the military service of the Indian princes; yet I shall not exchange my present masters so long as the merchants—who think nothing of glory or of this country, yet a great deal of their dividends—perceive that it is for their safety, as well as for their credit, to extend their power; and I have a reasonable hope that the good fortune which hath hitherto attended me may continue, so that I may return to my native country, if only in my old age, amply provided. As regards the climate, I have as yet experienced no great inconvenience from the heat. The natives have learned to fear an Englishman rather than to love him, which is, methinks, the thing we should most desire when we have to rule over people as ignorant of the Christian virtues, although not barbarous, like the naked blacks, but a most ingenious, dexterous, and skilful people, and of subtle intellect, yet slothful of body, lovers of rest, deceivers, regardless of truth, for ever scheming plots and contriving subtleties, and more cruel to prisoners than the Spanish Inquisition. The best among them are followers of Mahomet, who make faithful servants and good soldiers. It is a country where the ambition and jealousy of princes are continually causing fresh wars to be undertaken, and where a European may lead a life of adventure to his heart's content."

I was reading, as I have said, this letter aloud in presence of my two faithful friends. Now when I spoke of the drill on board, and the sergeant's rattan, and the regimental supple-jack, the Fugleman drew himself upright and shouldered the garden-spade, because there was no pike at hand; and when I read of the bo's'n's rope's-end and the ship's cat-o'-nine-tails, Sailor Nan cocked her hat and stood with feet apart and hands upon her hips, and began, but in a whisper, to murmur strange sea oaths; and when I read the account of the fight in which Ralph's courage saved this grateful Rajah—it was a most dreadful battle, in which hundreds of brave fellows and treacherous Hindoos were killed, so that to read it made one's heart cease to beat—the Fugleman, carried beyond him-

self, executed capers with the spade which signified little to my ignorant eyes, but which were, I believe, the movements with which the trained soldier attacks with the bayonet, and the old sailor with a mopstick cut down her thousands, mighty curses rolling softly from her lips like distant thunder.

If the beginning of the letter was delightful, judge how beautiful was the end:

"I have now, my dear, told you all that concerns myself. I suppose you have long since left Warkworth and gone to live with your parents, to whom I beg to convey my respects and best wishes. If, among your rich friends and the gaieties of the fashion"—the "gaieties!"—"you have found lovers (as to be sure you must) and a husband, or one whom you have distinguished with your favour and regard, you will remember that I shall ever be to you as a brother; for, lover or brother, I can never cease to love—"

"A good lad!" said the Fugleman.

"As ever trod the deck!" said the sailor. "Go on, Miss Drusy."

"And I am sure that you have grown up as tall and as beautiful as an angel."

"She has," said the Fugleman.

"Taller, ye lubber," said the sailor, "and more beautiful an angel than ever I clapped eyes on, nor never a Peg nor a Poll at Sheerness or Deptford or the Common Hard to show a candle alongside her. What's even a frigate in full sail compared with a lovely woman?"

This enthusiasm for the loveliness of her own sex (unusual among old women), I put down to her naval experiences, and familiarity with sailor talk, and went on quickly; because, if Ralph loved to flatter me, I ought not to let these poor people follow his example. An angel! But men are so. They cannot give enough; they lavish their praises, as they lavish the very fruits of their labours, upon the women they love. We women measure our gifts—except to our boys. I pass over, therefore, the fond words of a lover about blue eyes and curling hair, and Nymphs in cool grots, and soft smiles and other imaginary gifts and graces, all of which my listeners applauded, nodding their heads. Oh! he could say what he pleased, he could imagine all the perfections, so that he continued to tell me, as he did in this letter, how he thought upon me daily, and loved me always more and more.

"As for the address of this letter," he

said, "I know not where in London or elsewhere your father may now reside; therefore I forward it to the care of the Fugleman, with request that he will send it to you at the earliest opportunity, and by a safe hand. Will you, in return, inform him of my continued esteem and friendship?"

"Esteem and friendship!" repeated the Fugleman. "This from a Captain! Was ever such a boy?"

"And if you find an opportunity, tell Sailor Nan that half her fortune has come true."

She replied that at her time of life it was odd if she couldn't tell the fortune of a boy, and as for the present cruise, it was bound to be a fair-weather voyage.

Finally, my brave lover begged me to write to him and tell him all that had happened since his departure, and subscribed himself, with much love, Ralph Embleton.

When we had read the letter twice, which took us all the afternoon, and cost me three hours' sewing, we took counsel together. First they were both for telling it about the town, and having a bonfire, with the ringing of the church bells in a triple bob major, but I was of opinion that it would be best to keep our own counsel for awhile. Therefore I bound them both to secrecy and silence. I would let Mathew alone, and watch him. He should not know anything, not even that Ralph was alive and prosperous; and had I kept this resolution, because my two friends were loyal and secret as the grave, it would have been better in the end for all of us, and much better for Mathew. But, as the wise man said, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

CHAPTER VII. MATHEW'S FRIENDLY OFFER.

THIS letter made me, from one of the most unhappy of girls, the most joyous. The immediate prospect of poverty—for the Dame declined daily—the hard work which began at daylight and ended at bedtime, the certain knowledge that Mathew was not satisfied with a simple refusal—these things, which had before filled my mind with terror, now appeared like the imaginary spectres of the night, which cease to alarm when the day has dawned. To me it was more than the dawn of day; it was the uprising of a glorious sun of love and hope. Ralph loved me; Ralph was well, prosperous, and in high esteem; Ralph was already wealthy; Ralph would come

home, and all things would be well, whatever might happen at the moment. Yet this I could not tell to any. Mathew was not to know; my poor old grandmother was too old now, and too failing of mind and body, to care for earthly things; my father had clean forgotten the boy; my mother would not greatly care to know; nor would it soothe her anxieties to feel that we had a protector separated from us by the rolling seas and by a voyage of ten months or more. What good would be his far-off treasures to us, she would have asked, when what we want is beef for the pot and bread for the board? As for my father's madness, it increased every day, so that now our cottage was a palace indeed, every meal was a banquet, and the small beer of my brewing was champagne, port, Malaga, or Imperial Tokay. But Mathew was too much with him, and it made me uneasy to observe how he complimented my father on his wisdom, his resolution, and his wonderful success.

"In all respects, madam," he said to my mother, "I find your husband most sensible and full of sound judgment. I have taken his counsel, of late, in many private matters of importance."

"Then the Lord help you!" said my mother sharply.

"What if he does exaggerate his private fortune?" Mathew went on. "It is a failing with many persons concerned in trade."

"If you mean this in kindness, sir," said my mother, "I thank you humbly for your good opinion of my poor distraught husband. If you mean it in mockery, you are a most cruel man."

"Indeed, madam," he replied, bowing, "pray believe that I mean it in kindness."

He had no kindness at all in his nature. He designed these words to cover his iniquitous purpose.

So he continued to come and go, and to walk with my father in the garden, and whatever wild things my father said he would accept gravely as if they were indeed words of wisdom. No one, except myself, suspected him of sinister designs, and my father disclosed to him the whole prodigious extent of his madness, so that I could have cried with shame and humiliation, Mathew knowing well, as all the world knew by this time, that we were little better than the poorest in the parish.

"The world, sir," the poor gentleman would say with a lofty air, "has yet to learn how great a benefactor a simple

London citizen may be. There have been many benefactors. I acknowledge their greatness. But wait, sir, until my will is opened and read. To you, friend Mathew, I have bequeathed a poor ten thousand pounds—no more."

"Oh, sir!" He bowed and spread his hands. "This is indeed goodness."

"It is the duty of a rich citizen to discover merit and to reward it—the plain duty. I am a London citizen, and am perhaps more proud of this position than becomes a Christian. The bulk of my fortune I have left to my daughter, whom I design in marriage for some great nobleman. But I have not forgotten the poor of my native pariah, Mathew—no, no; and you will find, when my will is read, that schools, a hospital, marriage-portions for the girls, and apprentice-money for the boys, will attest my remembrance of this place."

"Sir," said Mathew with a grin of contempt, "you will be a benefactor indeed."

Now, before I answered Ralph's letter, which I kept for more than a month in my bosom, reading it every day when I could snatch a moment, Mathew came to me, and after a little preamble, of which I am going to tell you, re-opened the distasteful subject of his courtship. I was in the garden, gathering herbs for a mint-julep, when I saw him standing at the garden-gate. He looked so jocund, he smiled so pleasantly, and he wore so self-satisfied an air, that I was quite certain some evil thing had happened.

"Drusilla," he said, "I have heard certain intelligence. You may depend upon its truth, which is confirmed in every particular. I think that you should be the first to hear it, sad though it be, yet what I could not but expect."

"I suppose," I said with a laugh, because I knew that he was about to invent some wicked falsehood, "I suppose you have got something to tell me about Ralph, whom your cruel conduct drove out into the world?"

"Nay," he replied, looking darkly, yet with a smile, "you may say what you please; you cannot offend me. I have just come from Alnwick, where I sold four fat beasts. At the inn I fell in with a strolling player, and talked with him over a glass about his wandering life. Presently I asked him whether he had seen, anywhere upon his travels, especially in places where actors like himself, with profligates and thieves resort, such a lad as Ralph

It is wonderful to relate that he remembered seeing the boy at a place called Grantham. It was about six or seven years ago. The reprobate lad was making love—actually making love—to a young actress. When my informant came across the party again, Ralph had left them."

At first I concluded that this was sheer fabrication, but afterwards gleaned that it was to a certain extent true; that is, that Ralph had made the acquaintance of the actress and her family on his way to London; but there was no love-making. How could there be, when he was already in love with me? And what follows was pure and clumsy invention.

"He wandered about with them playing and acting," Mathew went on, "for four or five years. Then he deserted them, or was turned out in disgrace—it matters not which—and, I am ashamed to say—but he looked delighted—took to the road, where he is now known everywhere as Black Ralph, or Bloody Ralph."

"Are you quite sure of what you say?"

"As sure as I am that he will be hanged as soon as he is caught."

I know not by what reasons Mathew persuaded himself, if indeed he did persuade himself, that Black Ralph, who was a notorious highwayman about this time, and practised his wicked calling upon the York Road, was Ralph Embleton. Yet he made so certain of it that he told—under strict promise of secrecy—the barber, who told everybody, also under promise of secrecy, and it was noised abroad that the distinction of giving birth to the most blood-thirsty villain in England belonged to Warkworth, and many people advised Mathew to go armed, and to provide his house with a loaded blunderbuss, a bulldog, and a few man-traps, because his cousin would probably visit him with intent to murder as well as rob.

"I suppose," Mathew went on to me, "that you will now give up thinking of that young vagabond. A pretty girl like you should throw your thoughts higher. Why, though your father's a beggar, as one may say—"

"He is not a beggar, so long as my grandmother lives."

"Perhaps that will not be much longer," he replied with an ugly grin. "Now, Drusilla, listen to me. You know that I've set my fancy upon you. I've been waiting just till you grew up, and then for—for one or two little things to ripen which have now ripened and turned out pretty

well. Now that everything is ready, there is no reason to wait any longer. Ralph being a highwayman and certain to be hanged—"

"Then, Mathew," I replied, "I will wait until he is hanged, and then you can talk to me again if you like. Now, go away, and leave me to my work."

He went away for that time, and next morning his sister Barbara came. She was at first mysterious about sudden changes of fortune, unexpected reverses, and the judgments of angered Heaven. These things I did not then consider as pertaining to myself, because I knew not how I had especially angered heaven, more, that is, than thoughtless youth may do at any time, and yet obtain forgiveness by daily prayer. She also added a certain exhortation to kiss the rod, which I pass over. Then she launched into praises of her brother. He was most industrious, she said; up early and to work before day-break; he was full of religion, which surprised me very much to hear; he was thrifty and had already saved a large sum of money—this, I found afterwards, was false; he could provide a comfortable home, and happy, indeed, she added, would be the woman on whom his choice should fall. Added to this that he was no longer young and scatter-brained, but arrived at the sober age of three or four and thirty; and that Mathew's wife would have the advantage of her own society, help, example, and admonition.

I told her that Mathew had got his answer, and that I thought it hard that a woman could not be supposed to know her own mind in so important a matter.

"What is your answer, then?" she asked.

"I will talk to Mathew on the subject again," I replied, "when Ralph is hanged, since this is a thing which both you and he desire so vehemently."

Two days afterwards Mathew himself met me as I was on my way to the castle. He begged me to give him another hearing, and, as I could not refuse so simple a thing, I led him by the path below the castle to the bank of the river, where he could talk at his ease and unheard.

First it was the same story. Would I forget the young villain and marry him? He was so much in love with me, that he would not say as some men—not so rich, mind you, as himself—would say, that I might go hang myself in my garters for aught he cared. He would forgive my

disrespect and impudence; he would forget the past altogether; people should see that he was of a truly noble and forgiving disposition; he would give me another chance, so great was his generosity. Very well, then, would I marry him?

I replied very gravely, that he had already received his answer. When Ralph was hanged, and not before, I would listen to him. Then I asked him seriously why he thought so meanly of me as to try this trumped-up story about play-actors and highwaymen upon me, and reminded him of what a truly wicked disposition he must be, thus to glory and delight in the supposed wickedness of his cousin, whose guardian he had been, and whose lands he now occupied.

He grew angry at this plain-speaking, and began to swear, as is the wont of such men. If kindness would not move me, he said, something else should be tried. I thought I was free and independent of him, did I? I should see what power was in his hands, and what mischief he could do me. I was young and imprudent. It chafed me to hear that he, and such a man as he, could do me harm—as if the meanest wretch who ever lived cannot do harm—and I told him what I ought to have kept a secret, that so long as Ralph lived, I should not want a protector; and that so far from his being a highwayman, I knew certainly that he was a prosperous gentleman, already held in great honour, and respected by all.

He was so staggered by this intelligence that I thought he was going to have some kind of fit. Consider how much it meant to him; he would certainly have to give up the mill, and to render a strict account of all his doings; he would be reduced to the station of a poor small farmer; he would be robbed of his revenge; and he would be convicted as a slanderer and calumnious person, if that mattered aught.

First he blustered and threatened. I dared, did I, to reproach him; very good, I should see what things he could do; I should laugh the other side of my mouth. Did I refuse his offer? Very well then. I should find out what his displeasure meant. And, perhaps, before long, I should be sorry for the insult I had offered him, and the proposal I had refused. He then flung away, becoming at this point speechless, and indeed he looked so angry that I was afraid he would have thrown me into the stream.

I went home, and said nothing to any-

body about the business; but I was troubled in my mind, and greatly afraid that the man would do some dreadful mischief if he could.

Well, he came again a third time to me. It was three days later. If I was disquieted, I could see that he was more so. His red cheeks were become pale, and his eyes were red. He was quiet in his manner, and held out his hand.

"Drusilla," he said, "I was wrong the other day. You won't marry me? Very well then. Never mind; someone else will if I want. What matters one woman more than another, if you come to think about it? What hurt me most wasn't your refusal, which I don't care for not one brass farthing, but your saying that I wanted Ralph to go bad. That was cruel to such a cousin and guardian as I was to that boy."

"Well, Mathew," I said, "if I was wrong, I pray you to forgive me."

"I should like to know, on the contrary, that he was becoming a credit to his family. I say," he added, "I should like to know it, if you can assure me of the fact."

"Then you may depend upon the truth of my statement, Mathew," I said. "He is already a credit to your family."

"How joyful a thing this is!" He folded his hands and raised his eyes hypocritically to heaven. "It shows that the many corrections I gave him produced their effect. I was a throwing of the bread upon the waters. After many days, as one may say, it hath come back to me."

He spoke with a sweetness which did not deceive me.

"And this prosperity, Drusilla. Who told you of it?"

"That I must not say."

"Where, in what place, is the boy?"

"That I shall not tell you."

"How is he employed, then?"

"I must say nothing, Mathew. Do not ask me. It is very certain that Ralph is alive, and that he is prospering. I shall answer no more questions."

"I will ask other people, then."

"It is of no use," I said hurriedly. "There is no one knows except me." This was not true, but at the moment I was thinking of my mother, who certainly did not know.

"No one knows except you?" he repeated. "That is strange indeed."

"It is very strange."

"And how long," he went on, "is the mystery to be kept up?"

"As long," I replied, "as your cousin pleases."

Then his sweetness left him, and he fell again into a madness of wrath. He went away, however, when he found that I would tell him nothing.

All this time I had not written my answer to Ralph's sweet letter. The reason was that I feared my words would prove so poor and weak compared with his noble language; and I was afraid besides that what I might say would offend or disappoint him. What maiden but would have been ashamed? Yet this business with Mathew made me resolve to lose no time, and I began seriously to consider what I should say in reply to the long letter which I carried in my bosom and read daily. In order to be undisturbed, I carried paper and pen to the Fugleman's room at the castle, and wrote my letter in the afternoons, whenever I could snatch an hour from my work. What was I to say in answer to the many tender protestations of Ralph? And how was I to speak of Mathew?

"Tell him," said the Fugleman, "that Mathew is a villain. Last Tuesday week there was a run to Coldstream—lace and brandy—Mathew stood in and found the ponies. Yet he is a villain."

"And what about yourself?" I asked.

"As for me," he said, "I always said that once the boy got his foot on the lowest rung, it would not be long before he was on the top of the ladder. Half-way up and more he is, I reckon by now. So that I am not surprised to hear of his good fortune, and only wish I was young enough to be his Fugleman. Tell him that first of all. But Mathew is a villain. Next you may say that I'm well and hearty, and likely to continue in the way of grace, such being my constitution and my habits. Mathew, his cousin, is a desperate villain. Tell him that. You may tell him next, that if he still regardeth eggs, I have got such a collection for him as can't be matched. As for Mathew, he is a rogue and a villain. Fish, tell him, are plentiful this year, and others there be in plenty. Yesterday I trapped a badger, and I know of a marten opposite the Hermitage. The birds are wild, but I had good sport with his Worship last winter, and hope to do something by myself when the nights draw out. Say next, that I send him my faithful respects

and humble good wishes; and Mathew is a villain. And as for your own pretty self, you sit down and tell him that there isn't a straighter maid, nor one more beautiful, on the banks of Coquet; while, as for eyes and shape and rosy lips——"

"Indeed," I cried, "I shall tell him no such nonsense. No, I will not tell him such nonsense."

"Why, he loves thee, sweetheart. Say it, child, to please him, so lonely he is, and so far away from us. I wish he had thy picture just now, with the pretty blushes on the cheeks and all. A girl ought to be proud for such as him to fall in love with her."

"Is he truly in love with me?" I said, with tears coming into my eyes, because now that the words were spoken, I knew very well how much I longed for that very thing. "Why, he says he wishes me happiness with my husband. As if I could take any husband but Ralph."

"There—there," he cried, "tell him that. Tell him that, and it will make him happy and bring him home."

"You think such a little thing as that would bring him home?"

"There's one thing," said the old man, "which women can never understand, and that's the strength and power of love. There was a man in Lord Falkland's regiment—but I cannot tell thee all the story. There was a young gentleman in the Fourteenth, when we were stationed at Gibraltar, in love with a Spanish lady—but of that another time. What did the soldier care that he got three hundred the next day? And as for the young gentleman, he would have done the same—and always said so—if another dozen of duels was to come after it, and him to be pinked in every one. Cheerfully he would have done the same for such another charmer. Ah! he would, and more; but women never understand."

With these mysterious words did he encourage me as to the force and vehemence among men, of the passion called love.

If Ralph was only home again, we should have a protector. I thought of this and hesitated no longer. Yet it was an unmaidenly thing which I did, and to this day I am uncertain as to whether I was justified by all the circumstances. It was, besides, a dangerous thing to do, because I am convinced that nothing more effectually turns aside the fancy of a man for a woman—which is a delicate and tender plant, even at its strongest—than the

thought that she is lacking in the modesty and reserve which are the choicest virtues of a maiden. Yet I ran that danger, though I imperilled the most precious thing to me in all the world, the heart of my Ralph. But there is a time to speak, as well as a time to keep silence. What I said was this:

"DEAR RALPH,—I have now received your letter, and I thank you for it with all my heart. My father hath lost all in London, and is now returned to his native place; we are, therefore, poor indeed, and have nothing to live upon except the annuity which he long ago bought for my grandmother, who fails daily; when she dies we shall have nothing. Also, my father is afflicted with a strange belief that he is rich. This makes us unhappy. Mathew hath spread abroad a report that the mill is his, and not yours at all, by reason of a second will, which nobody has seen except himself. I fear that you will have trouble with your cousin. The Fugleman is well and hearty, and bids me tell you——" Here I set forth as many of the messages as I could remember. "As regards myself, he bade me say many things, out of his kind heart, for he loves me; but I must not write them down. My dear Ralph, do not say again that you want me to have a husband. I shall never marry any husband, nor love any man, except yourself, if you still continue to love me. Indeed, there is no moment of the day—if you will not think me unmaidenly to confess this thing—when you are out of my thoughts, and I pray night and morning for your safety and speedy return. Mathew has asked me to marry him, and is angered because I refused. He has spread abroad reports that you are now a highwayman. Will you come back to us, dear Ralph? I am in great sadness, and I am afraid that Mathew means some mischief. Yet I would not mar your fortune by calling you away from the work you have in hand. Mathew threatens me with revenge, and Barbara, his sister, bids me read passages in the Holy Scriptures which threaten woe to sinners. I am afraid what they may do, though I cannot think that they can do us any evil. It makes me unhappy to think that any can believe here that you have become a highwayman. Yet I keep your letter secret, and no one knows where you are. The Fugleman says that a villain must have rope enough to hang himself. Ah, Ralph, if you could come back to us. But the quiet country would be

tedious to you after your splendours and the pleasure of an active life. But whether you come home or whether you stay, you must always believe that I am your loving

"DRUSILLA.

"P.S.—I forgot to beg that you may not take it ill that I have written these words. For, indeed, you may be married, or at least in love, with one more worthy than myself. And if that is so, I wish both her and you many years of happiness and love, and shall only ask her to let me love you still as my brother. How can Mathew presume to court a girl who has known Ralph?"

CHAPTER VIII. IS IT TRUE?

Now was Mathew pulled asunder with a grievous doubt and anxiety. For not only might his enemy, as he considered him, appear at any moment to demand a strict account, but he knew very well that if he pushed on his suit or attempted any devilry with us, I might send for Ralph and ask his protection. Yet could my story be true? How could I know, and I alone, of his welfare and the place of his dwelling? Was it possible, he thought, that such a secret, if there was any secret, should be entrusted to the keeping of a mere girl? If the boy was really doing well, why did he not return on his twenty-first birthday and claim his inheritance? So that the more he thought about it, the more he tried to persuade himself that the thing was false. And yet he was afraid; I could see that he was continually haunted by the fear of what might happen. He sought me often and begged for information concerning his cousin. Next, he tried my father, but his memory as regards the lad was quite gone; and my mother, but she took no interest in the subject, and said she knew nothing about the boy for her part.

"Yet," said Mathew, "your daughter pretends to know where he is and what he is doing."

"Then," replied my mother sharply, "Lord help the man! go and ask my daughter."

"But she will not tell me."

"Then how can I? Hark ye, Master Mathew, you come here too often. My daughter hath given you her answer. She bears no love to you; she will have none of you. Go, then, and leave us alone. We are poor enough, God knows, but not so poor as to thrust husbands on our girl against her will. Leave us to ourselves, good man, and find another wife."

My dear and sacred letter arrived in May. It was in July that I sent off my answer. I might look for a reply in sixteen, eighteen, or twenty months—some time in the winter of the next year, seventeen hundred and seventy-three. It seems a long time to an anxious heart when one has to wait three weeks for an answer to a letter sent to London. What, then, must be the patience of those who have to wait for nearly two years? Had I reflected further on the perils of my lover's life, the daily risks of battle, wild creatures, treacherous foes, and deadly fevers, I must have been a miserable wretch indeed during those months of waiting. Yet I was sustained by hope, which belongs to the time of youth, and looked for nothing but such a reply from Ralph as would, I thought, remove every care from my mind.

What a fond and foolish girl was I to think that a mere love-letter—which was all I looked for—would be able to give us our daily bread!

After this, Mathew remained quiet again for three or four months. That is to say, he came no more to the house. And so we went on in our thrifty way—I engaged with my needle for such ladies as would employ me, my mother watching my father, and my grandmother sitting in her arm-chair beside the fire, for the most part silent. Indeed, we were all silent except my poor deluded father, who now added a new craze, for he announced one morning very proudly that he had received a despatch from the King himself, by which he learned that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to confer upon him the honour of knighthood, a distinction which in the present day seems reserved for eminent citizens of London rather than for soldiers, as of old. He was now, therefore, Sir Solomon, and his wife was my lady. He also terrified us greatly by saying that the new dignity would oblige him to assume greater state and a more sumptuous manner of living. Our banquets were sumptuous, truly, and worthy of a knight and his lady. However, in the matter of diet and lodging he was easily satisfied, having been accustomed to plain fare and so entirely carried away by his strange craze as to be persuaded in his own mind that a herring was a turbot; mutton-broth, turtle-soup; and a piece of roast mutton a haunch of venison. But now it was impossible to disguise from our neighbours what, indeed, they had long

known, that my father was incurably mad. He expected when he took the air of an afternoon to be saluted with the respect due to Sir Solomon, and hats off from everybody, and was pleased with obeisances which were meant in pity, if not in ridicule. And in his presence my mother must be addressed as my lady and spoken of as her ladyship, which made her hang her head at first and look foolish until she became accustomed to the vanity of the thing and found that it pleased him. For it is a strange thing that if you humour a crazy person in his craze, although you strengthen and confirm him in his belief, you make him happy and satisfied with himself, whereas, if you argue or contest it, or if you pass it over in contempt, you are apt to make him uncomfortable and uneasy without convincing him at all of his error.

So great, and reasonably great, was my suspicion of Mathew, that I was certain he would do something to revenge himself upon me, or to get me in his power. Yet I knew not—I could not guess—what he would do, or in what way he could injure me, as if the machinations of wicked men can ever be suspected and guarded against; as if the head of him who is desperately wicked may not conceive, yea, and execute, things which an innocent girl would believe incredible. The first alarm was caused by a visit from Barbara, who came to see my mother and myself, together or separately. She said she was a messenger from her brother, who, whatever I might say or think, was the most forgiving and the most long-suffering of men; that he was perfectly prepared, if I would make submission, ask pardon for the injurious things I had said, and reveal what I knew of Ralph, viz.: where he was living, what he was doing, and what were his intentions; to pass over all, and to take me once more into favour.

"Good Lord!" said my mother. "Does the man think he is the Great Bashaw? Favour, indeed!"

"Beggars," said Barbara, "must not be choosers."

At these words my mother flamed up, and asked Mistress Barbara many questions relating to her birth, parentage, wealth, religious professions, personal beauty, and so forth, leaving her no time to answer any. This is, with respect to the memory of a kind parent, a manner of speech common among women—even well-bred City

Madams when they are angry. Finally, she said that there had been quite enough said about Mathew's proposals, and that he was to understand again, and once for all, that they were distasteful; upon which Barbara coughed, and said that she had delivered her message, that she had no desire, for her own part, for the alliance, which would certainly be as distasteful to herself as it was to Mrs. Hetherington, and more so, for her brother had a right to look for fortune, which would be of much more use to him than a baby-face; that she was surprised, being a messenger of peace, and sent by a man of substantial estate, as all the world knew, to be thus treated by folk who were expected shortly to come upon the parish, and the daughter to be glad of honest service and a crust. But enough said.

"Hoity-toity!" cried my mother. "This is brave talking, indeed, from plain millers and simple farmers. Is the world going upside down?"

Barbara went away, but returned again a little before Christmas. Mathew, she repeated, was of so Christian a disposition that he was still waiting for submission and to know where the boy was to be found. She also held up her skinny finger in warning, and when I laughed and refused either to make submission or to tell where Ralph was living, she bade me tremble and read the first chapter of the book of the Prophet Joel, applying verses four to twelve to my own case, especially the last clause, which on investigation proved to be a prophecy that joy should wither away from the sons of men. I laughed again, but I confess that I was disquieted. What consequences? I was soon to discover that the woman used no idle threat, though I believe that she did not herself know anything of the abominable plot which Mathew was contriving for our destruction.

This, I say, was just before Christmas. We passed the season of festivity in comfort, thanks to a gift from Mr. Carnaby of a noble sirloin and some bottles of good wine for my father; but on Twelfth Night my grandmother, who had become very feeble of late, suddenly showed signs of impending change. This was a truly dreadful thing for us, not only for the loss of a good and affectionate parent, which those who have faith ought not to lament, but because at her death we should lose even the small income which we had, and there would be nothing but the house. It was with despairing looks that my mother and I sat

by her bedside all that night. In the morning she died, having been speechless for some hours; but, as happens often with the dying, she rallied just before the end, and recovered for a moment the power of speech.

"Child," she whispered to me with her last breath, "thou hast been a good child. The Lord will reward thee. Be of good hope, and never doubt that the boy will return to be thy protector and thy guide."

After her funeral I asked my mother if she had any money at all. She told me that on leaving London some of their old friends made up between them a purse of a hundred guineas in memory of old times, but after payment of their small debts and the cost of the journey from London, she had the sum of fifty-five guineas put by for unforeseen wants—that we must live on this money as long as it lasted, after which she supposed we must starve.

Fifty-five guineas! Why, it would last us a year and a quarter at least with prudence. Fifty-five guineas! It was a little fortune to us. It would keep us until I got a letter from Ralph. Whereupon I told my mother to be of good cheer and to wait patiently and hope for the best. She sighed, being never a woman of sanguine disposition, and ignorant of those secret springs of happiness within me which made me think lightly of present poverty.

And now you shall hear a plot of diabolical wickedness, which for the time was successful. We all know that for a season sinners are sometimes permitted to compass their own designs, but for their surer undoing in the end.

Two days after the burial of the Dame, at a time when we might be supposed to be overwhelmed by the calamity of being left destitute, Mathew came to the cottage. He looked ill at ease, and his eyes met mine shiftily, but he spoke out with boldness, while he produced a leather pocket-book and turned over certain papers within it.

"I have come, madam," he said, addressing my mother, but looking at me, "to inform you or your husband—it matters not which—that I can no longer wait for the interest or the principal of my money, and that you must be prepared to pay, or take the consequences."

"What interest? What money?" asked my mother.

"Why," he affected great surprise, "is

it possible that you are going to deny the debt?"

"What means the man?" my mother said impatiently.

"Nay," said Mathew, smiling, but looking like a hangdog villain the while, "this passes patience. I mean, madam, my loan to your husband."

"What loan?" she repeated; "and when?"

"Why," said Mathew, "if you pretend not to know, I am not obliged to tell you; but since— Well, I will tell you. I mean this, madam: the sum of two hundred pounds advanced by me to your husband, for which, and in security, he hath assigned me a mortgage on this house."

My mother was quite wise enough to know what was meant by a mortgage. She asked, but with pale face, where was his mortgage.

Mathew unrolled a paper and laid it on the table. My mother read it through hurriedly. Then she sank back in her chair and covered her face with her hands, saying:

"It is true, my child. Here is thy father's signature. This is the last blow."

Mathew rolled up the paper again and put it in his pocket.

"Can you, madam," he asked, "pay me my money?"

"Go ask of the poor demented creature to whom you lent it," she replied.

"Then," said Mathew, "if the money be not forthcoming, I must sell the house. Yet there is a way——"

"What way?" I asked.

"You know the way. You have only to tell me where the boy is, and to marry me."

I shook my head.

"And you, sir," cried my mother, "you who lend money to poor madmen for the ruin of their house, you—a villain if ever there was one—you think that I would give my daughter to such as you?"

"Very well, madam, very well," said Mathew, unmoved. "Very likely the cottage will sell for as much as the mortgage. Perhaps, if not, your husband may carry his extravagancies to a gaol, as provided by a righteous law."

Here he lied, because, I believe, my father could be called upon for nothing more than the house which was his security.

My mother pointed to the door, and Mathew went away, leaving us bewildered indeed. Two hundred pounds! Now,

indeed, we were ruined. But what had he done with the money?

"Mother," I cried, "it is a black and base conspiracy. My father has never, since he came from London, possessed a single sixpence. Think of it. If he had a penny we should have known it. Try to remember if ever you saw the least sign of his having money."

No, there was none. He wrote no letters and received none; he bought nothing. His clothes, which were now old and worn, were the same as those he wore when he returned home. On the other hand, because he was of a generous heart, he was for ever giving away what he called money in large sums by means of drafts upon London bankers, which he would sign and press upon the recipient with kind words. For instance, on my birthday he always gave me an order for a hundred pounds on a piece of paper, signed by his own hand, "Sol. Hetherington," bidding me, because I was a good girl, go buy myself some finery and fallals. At Christmas, the New Year, Easter, Roodmass, fair-time, and other times of rejoicing, he would fill his pockets with these valuable gifts, and sally forth—first to the Vicar, with an offering for the poor, saying that it was little merit to give out of abundance, that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver, that the poor we have always with us, that a rich man must remember the fate of Dives, and that, for his part, he would that the Church had all charities in her own hand, so that schismatics, profligates, and persons without religion should starve, with other pithy and seasonable remarks. Having received the Vicar's thanks, and a glass of usquebaugh to keep out the raw air of the morning, he would proceed up the village street, the boys and girls touching their caps and making curtsies to him, while the barber and blacksmith would offer the compliments of the season, with a hope that her ladyship was well. Then he would pass the cottage of Sailor Nan, and would call her out, and press into her hand a folded paper, saying that it was for Christmas cheer; that she must rejoice, with a dish of good roast beef and plum-porridge, and a great coal fire, and bidding her God speed, would go on his charitable way, while some laughed and some looked grave, and tears would fall from the eyes of the women to think that one so good and generous should also be so poor.

Alas! my father was one of those who could never become rich.

Even while we spoke of this, we heard outside the voice of my father, as if to confirm our words:

"It ill becomes men of substance, Mr. Carnaby, to allow poorer parishioners to bear the burden of such things. I will myself repair the roof of the church at my own charges. Nay, sir, permit me to take no refusal in this matter. If it stand me in a thousand pounds I will do it. Why, it is a lending unto the Lord; it is a good work."

It happened that in some way I had more influence over my father than anyone. That is to say, he would unfold his mind—such as it was, poor man!—to me with greater freedom than to my mother, who could never make any show of interest or belief in his magnificent designs and charitable schemes. I therefore tried to learn from him, if I could, the truth of this business. After listening to a long story of his intentions as regards the church and the endowment of the living of Warkworth, I turned the conversation upon Mathew Humble, and asked my father if he had of late seen and spoken with him. He said that Mathew now avoided rather than sought his company, for which he knew no reason, except that when you have obliged a man, it frequently happens that he keeps out of your way—a thing, he said, of common experience in the city, where young men, incautious men, and unlucky men often obtain assistance in the prolongation of bills and in loans.

"Since I have been of such great service," he said, "to Mathew Humble, he seems to think that he must not come so often as he did. A worthy man, however, and, perhaps, he is moved by the shame of taking assistance."

"Very likely, sir," I said, wondering what thing, short of the pillory, with the Fugleman and his pike beside it, would move Mathew to shame. "It is strange that men should thus court the appearance of ingratitude. Did you ever, sir, borrow money, sums of money, of Mathew Humble?"

"Lend, you mean, Drusilla," he replied, turning red with sudden anger.

"No, sir, I said borrow. Pray pardon me, sir, I had no intention to offend."

"But you have offended, child." He puffed his cheeks, and became scarlet with sudden passion. "You have offended, I say. Not offended? Do you know what you have said? Have words meaning for you? Should I, Solomon Hetherington,

Knight, known and venerated for my wealth, from Tower Hill to Temple Bar, and from London Bridge to Westminster, stoop to borrow—to borrow, I say, paltry sums—for he could lend none but paltry sums—of a petty farmer? Not mean to offend! Zounds! the girl is mad."

"Pray, sir, forgive me. I am so ignorant that I knew not——"

"To be sure, my dear, to be sure." He became as quickly appeased as he had been easily offended. "She does not know the difference between lending and borrowing. How should she?"

"And have you lent Mathew much, sir?"

"As for lending, I have, it is true, placed in his hands, from time to time, sums of money for which I have no security and have demanded no interest. But let that pass. I am so rich that I can afford to lose. Let it pass. And whether he pays them back or not, I do not greatly care."

"You gave this money to him," I said, "by drafts upon your bankers, I suppose."

"Why, certainly. You do not suppose that we London merchants, however rich we are, carry our money about with us. That would indeed be a return to barbarous times."

"Then there was the paper that you signed in the presence of an attesting attorney and of Barbara. What was that, father?"

He laughed and made as if he were annoyed, though he appeared pleased.

"Tut, tut," he said. "A trifle—a mere trifle; let an old man have his little whims sometimes; Drusilla."

"But what was it, sir?" I persisted.

"Mathew would have me call it a mortgage," my father went on. "A mortgage, indeed! Because he wished his sister not to know. It was—ho, ho!—a deed of gift, child. That is all. It was when I assigned certain lands to him. A deed of gift. We called it a mortgage, but I could not prevent showing Barbara by laughing—ha, ha!—that it was something very different. In addition to the money, I have bestowed upon him a field or so for the improvement of his farm. The gain to him is great; the loss is small to me. A mortgage, we agreed to call it. Ha! ha! Duly signed and witnessed. Your father, Drusilla, is not one to do things irregularly. Duly signed and witnessed."

This conversation made it quite clear to me that Mathew had contrived an abominable plot for our ruin. For the supposed

deed of gift which my father wished to sign, he substituted a real deed of mortgage, in which my father was to acknowledge that he had received two hundred pounds, for which he assigned his house for security, and without, as afterwards appeared, any clause as to time allowed after notice should be given of foreclosing. How far the lawyer was concerned in this conspiracy I know not. Perhaps he was innocent. Indeed, I am now inclined to believe that he was innocent of any complicity. How far Barbara—perhaps she, too, was ignorant of this wickedness.

All that night I lay awake turning the thing over in my mind. I planned a thousand mad schemes; I would break into Mathew's room and steal the papers. I would go round the town and proclaim his wickedness; I would inveigle him into surrendering the papers by a false promise of marriage; I would seek the protection of Mr. Carnaby. All these things I considered, but none of them approved themselves on consideration, because a forger and a cheat will always be ready, if he escapes punishment for the first offence, to repeat his wickedness. Lastly, I resolved upon seeking Mathew at the mill, where I could talk to him at greater freedom.

I went there in the afternoon about two of the clock. When I lifted the latch I saw Barbara sitting on the settle near the window working. Before her, as usual, lay an open Bible. Strange! that one who was so hard and severe could draw no comfortable things from a book which should be full of comfort.

She shook her long lean forefinger at me.

"I have known," she said, "for a long time the ruin that hangs over your house. I saw your father sign the mortgage. He laughed and called it a deed of gift, I remember. Ah! good money after bad. But my brother, who was foolish enough to lend the money, was not so foolish as to let it go without security. A deed of gift! He is cunning, your father, and would deceive me if he could, I doubt not." She turned over the leaves and found something that seemed to suit the occasion and my demerits. "'He hath made thy vine bare.' My brother is full of compassion. 'He hath made it clean bare.' Thy punishment hath begun."

"I wish to see your brother alone."

"Do you come in peace or in enmity? If in peace, you must first make submission, and confess your deceits as regards

the boy, who is surely dead. Nothing else will satisfy him. You can begin with me. Where is the boy?"

"What I have to say is with your brother, not with you."

"Go, then; but remember, when you are married, look not to be mistress here. I shall continue to be the mistress as I have always been. If you come in enmity, then you have me to battle with and not my brother alone. Two hundred pounds is not a sum to be given away for naught. Men are soft where a woman is concerned; Mathew may be a fool for your sake; you may look to wheedle him out of his papers. Ah, but you shall not. He may be a fool, but I am behind. I am not soft; your eyes will not make a fool of me, Mistress Drusilla."

She then bade me go within, where I should find her brother.

It was a cloudy afternoon, and, so early in the season, already growing dusk; Mathew was seated beside the fire, and on the table a stone jar containing Hollands which he had already begun to drink.

"Pretty Drusilla!" he cried, astonished. "Have you brought the money?"

"No," I said. "I come to learn if you are in earnest or in jest."

"In jest?" Then he swore a loud oath. "See you, my lass; if that money is not paid next week, your house will be sold. Make your account of that. But if you comply with my conditions, the papers shall be torn up."

"Then I am come to tell you, Mathew, that although I shall not comply with your conditions, the cottage will not be sold."

"Why not?"

"Because, first of all, that mortgage is false. I know now what you did. You caused my father to sign one paper believing it to be another. That is a fraud, and a hanging matter, Master Mathew."

He laughed, but uneasily, and he turned pale. Also, which is hardly worth the noting, he swore a great oath.

"It's a lie!" he cried. "Prove it!"

"I can prove it, when the time comes. Meantime, reflect on what I have said. It is a wicked and detestable plot. Reflect upon this and tremble."

He laughed again, but uneasily.

"There is another reason," I said, "why you will not sell the cottage. It is this. You are afraid that Ralph may come home and demand an account. Well, I can tell you this: that he will not come home just yet. But, if you do this thing, as sure as

I am alive, Mathew, I will write to him and tell him all. I shall tell him how you have persecuted me to marry you, not because you want me for your wife, and though you have had your answer a dozen times over, but because you want to plague and spite your cousin. I will tell him, next, how you have spread false reports about another will, and how you have whispered that he is turned highwayman. And lastly, I will tell him how you have practised upon the kind heart of a poor demented man, and made him sign his name in testimony of your own foul plot and falsehood. I will not spare you. I will tell him all. I will beg him to return post haste, and to bring with him officers of justice. Then, indeed, you may look for no mercy, nor for anything short of the assizes and Newcastle Gaol."

I spoke so resolutely, though, perhaps, through ignorance, I spoke foolishly, that I moved him and he trembled.

Yet he blustered. He said that all women are liars, as is very well known; that the boy was long since dead and buried; else why did he not return to claim the property? That, as for my story, he did not value it one farthing; while, as regards my accusation, he would laugh. In fact, he did laugh, but not mirthfully.

"Come, Drusilla," he said; "your father is welcome to the money, for aught I care. I do not desire to sell the cottage. Sit down and be friendly. Tell me all about the boy; and look, my lass"—his eyes were cunning indeed—"look you. Write to the boy; tell him, if you will, about the money. Tell him that I am willing not to press it if he will give reasonable assurance or security of his own in exchange. Let him, for instance, give me a mortgage on the mill, and let him, since he is so prosperous, pay the interest himself."

This was a trap into which I nearly fell. But I saw in time that he designed to find out in this way what he had to fear.

"I have told you," I said, "what I shall do."

"Ah! your story, I doubt, is but made up by woman's wit. Drusilla, you are a cunning baggage. Come, now, give over; stay here and be my wife; thou shalt be mistress in everything. As for Barbara, I am tired of her sour looks. She scolds all day. She may pack; she makes the meals uncomfortable; she may vanish; she stints the beer. We will keep house without her. She finds fault from morning to night. She is a——"

"You called me, Mathew!" Barbara suddenly opened the door and stood before us. Her eyes followed me as I went away with malignity difficult to describe, and Mathew, sinking back into his chair, feebly reached out his hand for the jar of Hollands.

CHAPTER IX. THE WISDOM OF THE STRONG MAN.

WHEN I went home I told my mother that for the present, at least, we need not fear anything from Mathew. Of this I was quite certain. My assurance that I would appeal to his cousin, the doubt where "the boy" might be—there was no reason, for instance, why he should not be at Newcastle, or at Rothbury, or at Hexham, or at Carlisle—to say nothing of my charge of fraud, went home to his guilty conscience. These things were sure, I thought, to deter a man not naturally courageous, although his conscience might be hardened, from tempting the vengeance of his injured cousin.

So far was I right, that for the whole of the spring and summer we had no further molestation from him, but continued in our quiet course, spending as little money as we could, yet looking forward to the time, now growing very near, when there would be no more left to spend. As for myself, I may truly declare that my faith was strong—I mean not the faith of a Christian, such as I ought to have held—but faith in my lover, so far away. He would send me an answer. The answer, whatever it might be, would surely set all right.

Mathew not only ceased to persecute us, but he ceased to desire the conversation and company of my father. He came no more even to church, as if conscious of his wickedness, and ashamed to face honest people. He was rarely seen even in the town, and he left me quite alone; so that I began to think that repentance had perhaps seized upon his soul. Alas! Repentance knocks in vain at the heart of such as Mathew.

Though, however, we saw him not, I heard, through my faithful Fugleman, certain intelligence about him. Thus, he drank harder; he neglected his business; he quarrelled daily with his sister, who reproached him for his drunken ways, and the neglect of his worldly affairs; also, she continually urged him to recover the two hundred pounds owed to him, as she thought, by my father. She hungered and

thirsted after this money, which, it seemed, she did not know that her brother possessed. Why had he concealed from her, she asked him with anger, that he had so much as two hundred pounds, when he would not give her even money to buy things wanted for the house? Let him get the money back. Was he mad to let interest and all go? She let him have no peace; she longed to have this money; perhaps she longed for our ruin as well. Then she constantly threw in her brother's teeth the fact that if the boy was not dead and should return, if, in fact, my story was true, he would find the books and accounts in such confusion as might lead to their ruin. She wanted to know what truth there was in the reports, once so industriously spread, about a second will. In fact, she led the wretched man a dog's life, having a tongue sharper than a sword and more dreadful than a fiery serpent. But, as concerning the things she said of Ralph, I could have desired nothing better, because it kept alive in Mathew's breast the wholesome fear of his cousin's return. So long as that lasted, we were safe. We should have continued in safety, because that fear did not die away, but rather increased day by day, save for the instigation, as I cannot but believe, of the Evil One, and the concoction of a design even more wicked than that of the mortgage. I suppose the plot was conceived in the spring or summer, but it was not until the late autumn that it was attempted. The way of it was as follows (I do no harm, I trust, by speaking openly of a traffic which, as everybody knows, is conducted almost openly all over the northern counties of England and the southern counties of Scotland).

I have mentioned one Daniel, or Dan, Gedge, always called the Strong Man, because he was like Hercules, the fabled Greek, for bodily strength, who lodged with Sailor Nan. He professed to make a living out of his strong arms and legs. He went to fairs, and was seen on market-days in all the towns of Northumberland, Durham, and Carlisle performing great feats for wagers, or for money laid down. He would tie heavy weights to his nose and bear them so suspended round the market; he would lift and carry a pony or a cow; he would crush—but this was nothing to him—pewter pots with his hands, break iron bars and great pokers over his left arm—as many as they might bring to him; he would twist gold and

silver pieces of money, if gentlemen gave them to him, with his fingers; carry a dozen men upon his shoulders and in his arms; run round a table on his thumbs; pull a cart against a yoke of oxen, and perform many other surprising feats, the memory of which still survives though the poor man is dead, having been surprised by a snow-storm when in liquor, so that he sat down and fell asleep in the drift, his mighty thews availing him naught, never to wake again. By these performances he made great gain, which he spent, for the most part, on the spot where he was paid, and in drink, having a thirsty spirit, and, besides, being ready when he had the means to oblige other thirsty souls who had not. He was a man standing over six feet, with legs and arms of surprising stoutness, a square red face, and a kindly eye. Despite his strength he was peaceful, and the softest hearted of mankind. Now, though he pretended to live by the exhibition of his strength, which I believe was the reason why the Vicar called him Milo, it was very well known everywhere that he had another and a more important source of profit. This was in the running of "stuff" across the Border, a business which demands, as everybody knows, much caution, with knowledge of the country and powers of endurance. The "stuff" consists generally of brandy, lace, silk, and Geneva. Salt is also smuggled across, but a better profit is made out of the former articles, which are less in bulk and more easily concealed. There are many reasons why Warkworth should be a convenient spot for the illicit trade. First, it lies two miles up the river, and has many safe hiding-places, so that a cargo once landed at the mouth of the Coquet may be safely and speedily carried up the river, and bestowed where it is judged safe; for all along the steep banks there are spots clearly designed by Nature for the convenient storage of valuable packages. Not to speak of the thick hanging woods beside the banks, where enough Geneva and Hollands may be stored to supply London for a year, there is the Hermitage, whose double chamber I have myself seen packed full of silk in bales waiting for an opportunity, while in the Castle itself there are vaults, dungeons, passages, and secret chambers, known only to the Fugleman. Here, little suspected by my Lord of Northumberland, enough brandy might be stored to supply the county (which is a thirsty one) for a dozen years. The

Border is not, to be sure, so near as it is higher up the coast, but on the other hand, the look-out and watch kept by the gaugers cannot be by any means so vigilant and close as where the county narrows to the north; while more than half the run takes place over the wild moors and pathless slopes of the Cheviots, a place in which the Excise people find it difficult indeed to discover or to stop a run made by men who know the country. They have a service of ponies for the work, little hardy, sure-footed creatures, who carry the ankers, kegs, and bales slung across their backs, and can be trusted to make the whole thirty-five miles from Warkworth to the Border in a single night; that is, in seven or eight hours, the drivers walking or riding beside them.

Most of the farmers and craftsmen of Warkworth take a share in these risks and profits; one or two of them—of whom Mathew was one—often accompany and lead the expedition. Everybody knows beforehand when a run is arranged; many in the town know the very night when it will take place, the road chosen, and the value of the stuff. There is so much sympathy with this work, on both sides of the Border, and so many partners in the venture, that information is never given to the Excise, and hiding-places are found everywhere, with the help and connivance of the most innocent-looking plough-boy and the most demure country lass.

Now one morning—it was in November, when the days have already become short, and the nights are long and dark—Dan Gedge got up from his sleeping bench or cupboard in the wall, about eight or a little after, calling lustily for small beer, of which he drank a quart or so as a stay to his stomach before breakfast. Then he dressed and came forth to the door with the mug in his hand.

Sailor Nan was already seated on her stone, pipe in mouth, and three-cornered hat on her head. She had taken her breakfast, and now sat, regardless of the raw cold air—for all the winds that blow were the same to her—looking up and down the street, in which nothing as yet was moving, though the blacksmith's apprentice across the road had lit the fire, and the cheerful breath of the bellows made one feel warm.

"Fugleman and me," said Dan, yawning, "Fugleman and me, we was rowing up and down from Amble most all night."

"What is the run!" asked Nan, who needed no other explanation; "and who's in it?"

"Mathew Humble is in it for one," said Dan. "Going with it himself, he is, this journey. Ho! ho! Folks will talk of this run when they come to hear of it. The Fugleman thinks he knows. But he don't; no, he don't know. He's not to be trusted. I'm the only one who knows. Aye, a rare run it will be, too—out of the common this run will be. Folks will lift up their heads when they hear of this night's work?"

"What is it, Dan? Lace belike."

He shook his stupid head and laughed. How could Mathew have been such a fool as to trust him?

"Belike there's lace in it, and silk in it, and brandy in it. There's always them things. But there's more, Nan—there's more."

"What more, Dan?"

"Fugleman, he'll laugh when he hears the news. He's helping in the job, and he don't know nothing about it; only Mathew and me knows what that job is. Mathew and me—and one other."

"Who is the other, Dan? And what is the job?"

He shook his head and buried it for safety in the pewter-pot.

"Mathew Humble," he said, "is a masterful man."

"What is the job?" asked Nan, feeling curiosity slowly awaken.

"It is a job," replied Dan, "which can't be told unto women."

"Why, ye lubber," she sprang to her feet and shook her fist in the Strong Man's face, so that he started back; "lubber and land-lubber, you dare to call me a woman—Captain of the Foretop. Now, let me hear what this job is that I am not to be told. Out with it, or——" I omit the garnish of her discourse, which consisted of sea oaths.

"Mathew Humble did say——" the Strong Man began. But strong men are always like babies in the hands of a woman.

"Vast there, Dan," said Nan; "d'ye think I value your job nor want to know what it is—a rope's end? But that you should refuse to tell it to me, your shipmet—that's what galla. And after yester-forenoon's salmagundi!"

This accusation of ingratitude cut poor Dan to the quick. In the matter of seapie, lobscouse, and salmagundi (which is a mess of salt beef, onions, potatoes, pepper, oil, and vinegar, the whole fried to make a toothsome compound) Sailor Nan was more than a mother to him.

"Twenty years afloat," continued Nan, in deep disgust; "from boy to Captain of the Foretop, and from Cape Horn to the Narrow Seas and Copenhagen, and to be told by a land-swab, who never so much as smelt blue water, that I'm a woman!"

"O' course," said Dan feebly, "I didn't really mean it."

"Didn't mean it! Why—there! What is it, then? Is it piracy, or murder?"

He shook his head.

"Look ye, Nan. It won't signify, not a button, telling you. I said to myself at the beginning, 'Nan won't spoil sport;' and it's only a girl."

Only a girl! Nan pricked up her ears. "As if I cared about girls," she said carelessly.

"Only a girl. It's Miss Drusay—that's all. You see she's been longing to run away with Mathew and marry him, for months. Longing she has, having took a fancy for Mathew, which is a strange thing, come to think of it, and she so young. But women are——. Ay, ay, Nan, I know. You see I always thought she was saving up for Ralph Embleton. But Mathew, he says that's nonsense. Well—she all this time longing to marry him, and her mother won't hear it—no chance till now. So it's fixed for to-night. What a run! Lace, and brandy, and Geneva, and a girl."

"Oh—well; I don't care. Go on, Dan, if you like."

He then proceeded to explain that Mathew had arranged for a pony to be saddled in readiness; that the signal agreed upon between the girl and Mathew was a message from the castle carried by a certain boy named Cuddy, pretending to come from the Fugleman, who was to be kept out of the way, employed at the Hermitage, where the stuff was bestowed; the boy was to say that the Fugleman was ill. On receiving this message the girl would make an excuse to run up to the castle, where she would mount the pony, and so ride off with Mathew and be married over the Border. To keep up appearances, he went on—this soft-headed giant—it had been arranged that the young woman was to scream and struggle at the first, and that Dan should lift her into the saddle, and, if necessary, hold her on. Once across the Border they would be married without so much as a jump over the broomstick.

Nan slowly rose.

"I'll get you some more beer, Dan," she said.

She went indoors, and poured about three-fourths of a pint of gin into a tankard which she filled up with strong ale, and brought out to her lodger with tender care.

"Drink that, Dan," she said; "it's good old stingo—none of your small beer. Drink it up; then you can put on your coat and go about your work."

He drank it off at a gulp, with every outward sign of satisfaction. Then he suddenly reeled and caught at the doorpost.

"Go and put on your coat, Dan," she said, looking at him with a little anxiety.

He disappeared. Nan heard one—two—heavy falls, and nodded her head. Then she followed into the room and found the Strong Man lying upon the floor, on his back with his mouth open and his eyes shut. She dragged a blanket over him, and went out again to sit on her stone with as much patience as a spider in October. She sat there all the morning as quiet as if she was on watch. About half-past two in the afternoon there came slowly down the street no other than Mathew Humble himself.

"Where is Daniel?" he asked.

Nan pointed to the door.

"He's within, fast asleep. He came home late last night. I dare say he'll sleep on now, if you let him alone, till evening."

"Have you—has he—talked with you this morning?" Mathew's eyes were restless, and his cheek twitched, a sign of prolonged anxiety or much drink.

"Nay; what should he say to me, seeing that he came home in the middle of the night as drunk as a pig? Let him bide, Master Mathew. What do you want him for? Is there a run?"

He nodded.

She held out her hand. "I'll drink luck to the venture," she said, taking the shilling which he gave her for luck. "Thank you; this is sure to bring you luck. You'll say so to-morrow morning. Remember that you crossed old Nan's palm with a shilling. A lucky run! Such a run as you never had before. A run that will surprise the people."

"Ha! ha!" said Mathew, pleased with the prophecy. "It shall surprise them."

"And how do you get on with Miss Drusy, now? So she said nay. She will and she won't—ay, ay—I know their tricks. Yes, a fine girl, and spoiling, as one may say, for a husband. Take care, Master Mathew. Better men than you have lost by shillyshally."

"Why, what would you have me do, Nan?"

"Do? A man o' mettle shouldn't ask. Capture the prize; pipe all hands and alongside; then off with her; show a clean pair of heels; clap all sails."

"I believe, Nan," Mathew said, "that you are a witch."

"I believe," she replied, "that after your run you'll be sure I am. Go in and wake Dan."

The fellow, roused rudely, sat up and rubbed his heavy eyes.

"You can't be drunk still, man," said Mathew, "seeing it's half-past two in the afternoon."

"My head," said Dan, banging it with his great fist, "is like the church bell before the service—goeth ding-dong. And my tongue, it is as dry as a bone. Last night—last night—Where the devil was I last night?"

"Get up, fool, and put on your coat and come out. We have work to do."

The fellow made no reply. He was stupidly wondering why his head was so heavy and his legs like lead.

"Come," Mathew repeated, "there is no time to lose. Up, man."

They left the house and walked up the street.

When they were gone, Nan took the pipe out of her mouth, and considered the position of things with a cheerful smile.

"As for Mathew," she said with a grin, "he will get salt eel for his supper. Salt eel—nothing short."

She doubted for a while whether to impart the plot to the Fugleman. But she remembered that though he was no older than herself he would take the thing differently, and a fight between him and Dan, not to speak of Mathew as well, could have only one termination. Had she been twenty years younger, she would not have hesitated to engage the man herself, as she had led many a gallant boarding-party against any odds. But her fighting days were over.

What she at last resolved upon marked her as at once the bravest and the most sensible of women. But her resolution took time for the working out. She sat on her stone seat and smoked her pipe as usual. When any boys passed her door she shook her stick at them, and used her strange sea phrases, just as if nothing was on her mind.

It grows dark in the short November days soon after four, which is the hour

when folks who can afford the luxury of candles light them, sweep the hearth, and prepare the dish of cheerful tea. There was no tea for us that year, but small ale of our own brewing or butter-milk. And my mother sat in great sadness for the most part, not knowing what would be the end, yet fearful of the worst, and being of feeble faith. Certainly, there was little to give her cause for hope.

It was at half-past six or seven that I heard footsteps outside, and presently a knock at the door. I saw, to my amazement, no other than old Nan. It was a cold and rainy evening, but she had on nothing more than her usual jacket and hat. A hard and tough old woman.

"Child," she said earnestly, "do you think that I would lead thee wrong, or tell thee a lie?"

"Why, no, Nan."

"Then, mark me, go not forth to-night."

"Why should I go forth? It is past six o'clock, and already dark."

"If messengers should come—— Look! who is that?"

She slipped behind the door as a boy came running to the door. I recognised him for a lad, half-gipsy, who was well known to all runners, and often took part in driving the ponies. A bare-headed boy with thick coarse hair and bright black eyes, who was afterwards sentenced to be hanged, but reprieved, I know not for what reason, and I forget now what he had done to bring upon him this sentence.

"The Fugleman says," he began at once, seemingly in breathless haste, "that he has fallen down and is like to have broken his back. He wants to see you at once."

"Oh," I cried, "what dreadful thing is this? Tell him I'll come at once. Run, boy, run. I will but put on a hat and——"

The boy turned and ran clattering up the road and across the bridge.

Then Nan came out from behind the door.

"It's true, then. The kidnapping villains! It's true. But I never had a doubt. Go in doors, hinney. Stay at home. As for the Fugleman, I'll warrant his back to be sound as my own. Wait, wait, I say, till you see Mathew's face to-morrow! A villain, indeed!"

"But, Nan, what do you mean? My dear old Fugleman a villain! What has he to do with Mathew?"

"No child, not he. There's only one

villain in Warkworth, though many fools. The villain is Mathew Humble. The biggest fool is Dan Gedge. He is such a fool that he ought to be keel-hauled or flogged through the Fleet, at least. Stay at home. This is a plot. The Fugleman is in the Hermitage at work among the stuff. There's to be a run to-night. And they think—— Avast a bit, brother. Aye, aye, they shall have what they want. There's a hock of salt pork and a pease-pudding for supper. I looked forward to that hock. Never mind it. The villain—he to run this rig upon a girl! But old Nan knows a mast from a manger yet, and values not his anger a rope's-end." Here she became incoherent, and one heard only an occasional phrase, such as—"from the sprit-sail yard to the mizen top-sail halyards;" "a mealy-mouthed swab;" "a fresh-water wishy-washy fair-weather sailor;" "thinks to get athwart my hawse," and so forth. To all of which I listened in blank wonder. Thus having in this nautical manner collected her thoughts—strange it is that a sailor can never mature his plans or resolve upon a plan of action without the use of strong words—she begged me to lend her my cardinal, which was provided with a thick and warm hood, of which we women of Northumberland stand in need for winter days and cold spring winds. She said that she should keep her own cloth jacket, because the work she should do that night was cold work, but she borrowed a woollen wrapper which she tied over her head and round her neck, leaving her three-cornered sailor's hat in my keeping. Lastly, she borrowed and put on a pair of warm leather gloves, remarking that all would be found out if once they saw or felt her hand. This, to be sure, was a great deal larger than is commonly found among women. When all these arrangements were complete, she put on the cardinal and pulled the hood over her head. "Now," she asked, "who am I?"

Of course, having my clothes upon her, and being about the same height, with her face hidden beneath the hood, she seemed to be no other than myself. Then with a last reference to swabs, lubbers, and land-pirates, she once more bade me keep within doors all night, if I valued my life and my honour, and trudged away, telling me nothing but that a piratical craft should that night be laid on beam-ends, that her own decks were cleared, her guns double-shotted the surgeon in the cock-pit

and the chaplain with him, and, in short, that she was ready for action.

I saw no more of her that night, which I spent in great anxiety, wondering what this thing might mean. But in the morning, fearing some mischief, I walked up the street to the castle. The Fugleman was in his room; he had sent me, he said, no message at all; nor had he fallen; nor had he broken his back. The boy Cuddy, it appeared, had been helping him, and running about backwards and forwards all day. When the ponies were loaded he had returned to the Hermitage to set all snug and tidy. When he came back to the castle they were gone. But no breaking of backs and no sending of the boy. This was strange indeed.

"Then, Fugleman," I said, "Mathew Humble sent a lying message, meaning mischief."

What he designed I understood in two or three days. But for the time I could only think that he wished to open again the question of his suit. Yet, why had Nan borrowed my cardinal and my gloves?

On the way back I looked into Nan's cottage. The door was open, but there was no one in the house.

I went home, little thinking what a narrow escape was mine. Had I known—but had I known, I should have been divided between gratitude to Heaven, and admiration of brave old Nan, and detestation of the greatest villain in England.

CHAPTER X. SAILOR NAN'S RIDE.

THE night was cold and raw, with a north-east wind, which brought occasional showers of sleet. There was no moon. The street, as the old woman walked up to the castle, was quite deserted, all the women and girls being seated at home about bright coal-fires, knitting, sewing, and spinning, while all the men were at the ale-house, telling stories or listening to them, an occupation of which the male sex is never wearied, especially when beer or rumbo, with tobacco, accompanies the stories.

Nan climbed up the castle hill, and passing through the ruined gate, began to pick her way slowly among the stones and heaps of rubbish lying about in the castle-yard. The light of the fire in the Fugleman's chamber was her guide, and she knew very well that just beside the door of that room would be lurking Strong Dan, with intent to seize her by the waist

and carry her off. Perhaps he designed to carry her in his arms all the way to the Border. This thought pleased her very much. Dan was quite able to do it, and the distance is only thirty-five miles or so. It pleased her to think of such a ride in the Strong Man's arms, and how tired he would be at the end.

Accordingly, when she drew near the door she went very slowly, and was not in the least surprised when, as she stood in the fire-light, the man stepped from some hiding-place at hand, caught her by the waist, and tossed her lightly over his shoulder, making no more account of her weight than if she had been a mere bag of meal.

"Now, mistress," he said, "struggle and kick as much as you like. It don't hurt me."

She cheerfully acceded to this request, and began so vigorous a drumming upon his ribs that had they not been tougher than the hoops of the stoutest cask, they must have been broken every one. As it was, he was surprised, and perhaps bruised a little, but not hurt. He had not thought that a young girl like myself had such power in her heels.

"Go on," he said; "you're a strong'un, and I like you the better for it. Kick away, but don't try screaming, because if you do I shall have to tie your pretty head in a bag. Master Mathew's orders, not my wish. Besides, what's the use of pretending, when there's nobody here but you and me, bless your pretty eyes! I know all about it, and here's a honour for you to be carried off, nothing less, by your own man. Why, there isn't another woman in Warkworth that he'd take so much trouble for. Think upon that! Now then, miss, another kick, or a dozen, if you like. Ah, you can kick, you can. You're a wife worth having. A happy man he'll be. Lord, it would take the breath out o' most that last kick would. Why, I'll swear there's not a woman in all Northumberland with such a kick as yours. Keep it up."

Thus talking, while she drummed with her heels, he slowly carried her through the dark gateway, picking his feet among the stones.

Outside the castle, beyond the great gate, another man was waiting for them, wrapped in a great cloak. It was Mathew Humble. He had been drinking, and his speech was thick.

"Now," he said, seizing the prisoner by

the arm, "you are in my power. Escape is impossible. If you cry out—but I am your master now, and for the rest of your life I mean to be. You have got to be an obedient wife. Do you hear? I've had enough of your contempts and your sneers. You'll write to the boy, will you, mistress? Ha! Fine opportunities you will have on the way to Scotland to-night. Ho! The boy will be pleased when he hears of this night's job, won't he?"

"Come, mistress," said Dan, setting her down gently, "here's the place and here's the ponies, and if you like, just for the look of the thing and out of kindness, as a body may say, to rax me a cuff or a clout, why—don't think I mind it. Oh, Lord!"

It was a kind and thoughtful invitation, and it was followed by so vigorous, direct, and well-planted a blow that he reeled.

"Lord!" he cried again, "I believe she's knocked half my teeth down my throat. Who the devil would ha' thought a slip of a girl—— Why, even Nan herself——"

He asked for no more clouts, but kept at a respectful distance.

There were half-a-dozen ponies, all loaded in readiness for the road. Mathew, Dan, and the boy they called Cuddy were to conduct the expedition, the two latter on foot, the first on pony-back. There was also a pony with a saddle, designed, I suppose, for me.

"Now, Drusilla," said Mathew, "get up; there is a long journey before us and no time to spare. Remember—silence, whether we meet friend or stranger. Silence, I say, or——" He shook a pistol in her face.

She drew the hood more closely down, and pretended to shrink in alarm. Then, without any more resistance, she climbed into the saddle, and took the reins from Mathew's hands.

"That's a good beginning," he said. "Maybe you have come to your senses and know what is best for yourself. And hark ye, my lass, if you behave pretty, we'll send Barbara to the devil. If you don't, you shall have a mistress at the mill as well as a master. Think upon that, now."

Then the procession started. First Cuddy; then the ponies, two by two, who followed the boy as the sheep follow their shepherd; lastly, Mathew, upon his pony; Nan upon hers; and on the other side of her Dan Gedge, still wondering at the

unexpected strength displayed in those kicks and that clout.

In addition to the advantages already spoken of possessed by Warkworth for the convenience of a run, should be mentioned the happy circumstance that it lies close to the wild lands, the waste moors and hills which occupy so large a part of Northumberland. These moors are crossed by bridle-paths, it is true, but they are mere tracks, not to be distinguished from sheep-runs except by the people who use them, and these are few indeed. If you lose the track, even in broad daylight, you run the risk of deep quagmires, besides that of wandering about with nothing to guide the inexperienced eye, and perhaps perishing miserably among the wild and awful hills. As for the boy Cuddy, he possessed a gift which is sometimes granted even to blind men, of always knowing where he was and of keeping in the right path. It is with some an instinct. He was invaluable on these winter runs, because, however dark the night, whether the moors were covered with thick fog or impenetrable blackness, or even if they were three feet deep in snow, he never failed to find his way direct to the point whither they desired to go. In general, however, the wildest road, though the shortest, was avoided, and the ponies were driven through the country which lies north, or north-east of the Cheviots. But on this occasion, so great was Mathew's desire to ensure the safety of a run in which his ponies carried something more precious even than lace or rum, that he resolved upon trying the more difficult way across Chill Moor, south of Cheviot. Even on a summer day the way across this moor is difficult to find. On a winter's night it would seem impossible. Yet Cuddy declared that he could find it blindfold. They were to cross the Border by way of Windgate Fell and to carry their stuff to the little village of Yetholm on the Scottish side.

If you draw a straight line on a county map almost due west from Warkworth, you will find that it passes near very few villages indeed all the way to the Scottish Border. The ground begins to rise a mile or so west of the town, and though up to the edge of the moors the country is mostly cultivated, the only villages passed the whole way for thirty miles, are Edlingham, Whittingham, and Alnham, and it is very easy for safety's sake to avoid these. First, then, they rode slowly and in silence for six

or seven miles as straight across the country as hedges and gates would allow. Presently striking the bed of the Hampeth Burn, they followed it up, rough as the way was, as far as the Black Tarn, which lies among the hills east of Edlingham. Here they turned to the right, keeping still upon the high ridge, and crossed Alnwick Moor, whence they presently descended till they found themselves in the little valley down which the river Aln flows at this point. Here the going was as bad as could be, the ponies feeling their feet at every step, and the progress slow. Yet they never stopped for an instant, nor did the boy hesitate. Mathew kept silence, riding with hanging head, full of gloomy thoughts.

It was past midnight, and they had been in the saddle for five hours and more, when they reached the place, close to the village of Alnham, where they were to leave the guidance of the winding burn and trust themselves to the knowledge of the boy upon the pathless moors. Here, under the shelter of a linney, Mathew called a halt. Dan produced a lantern and a tinder-box, and presently got a light. Then he found some provisions in one of the packs, and they ate and drank.

"You are so far from your friends now," said Mathew to his prisoner, "that you can talk and scream and do just exactly what you please, except run away. Now you guess what I am going to do. Once over the Scottish Border you will be my wife by Scottish law, if I call you wife. So that now, you know, you had better make up your mind and be cheerful."

She made no reply.

"Well, then, have you got nothing to say?"

She had nothing.

"Sulk, then," he said roughly. "Fall a sulking till you are tired. You may think, if you please, what your young devil of a sweetheart will say when he finds the nest empty! Alive and prospering, is he?"

He proceeded to express his earnest hope that the boy would shortly be beyond the reach of hope. This done, he informed Nan that the worst part of her journey had yet to be accomplished, and that she had better take some meat and drink, unless she wished to fall off her saddle with fatigue, in which case Dan would have to carry her. She accepted without speaking, and, under cover of her hood, made an excellent supper, being, in fact, already pretty well exhausted with fatigue and hunger. When she had finished,

Mathew offered her a bottle which contained brandy. He was amazed to find when she returned it to him that she had taken at one draught about half-a-pint of the spirit, so that he looked to see her reel and fall off the pony. That she did not do so he attributed to the effect of the cold night air and the long ride; being unsuspicious how strong and seasoned a head was hidden beneath that hood.

Supper finished, Mathew examined the boy concerning the road. He would tell nothing at all about it, yet he said he knew where to find it and how to follow it, and, in short, undertook to guide the party without danger by as short a way as could be found across the moor. He was certain that he could do this, but he would not explain how he knew the way nor in what direction it wound among the hills. In fact, how was a boy to describe a road who knew not north from south, or east from west, nor had any but the most simple English at his command in which to speak of valley or hill, ascent or descent?

The moor over which they crossed that dark night in as perfect safety as if a broad highway had been laid down for them, and was lit with oil lanterns like some of the streets of London, is the wildest, I suppose, in all England. I have heard of that great moor which covers half Devonshire, though I have never been in the south country. I have read about that other great and wild moorland which lies round the Peak in Derbyshire. I have ridden over the broad heath which stretches from Hexham to Teesdale, a place as wild as the people who live upon its borders, yet have I never seen, nor can I conceive, of any place or country so wild, so desolate, and so forsaken, save by hawks, vipers, and other evil things, as the land which lies by Cheviot, Hedgehope, and Windgate Fell.

The boy, as before, led the way, walking without hesitation, though the night was so dark. What he saw to indicate the road no one can tell. Nan, for her own part, could see nothing at all before her for the pitchy darkness of the night and the continual pattering of the rain.

Here is the very head of the Cheviots, the middle of the moors and fells, across which so many parties of plunderers, cattle-lifters, and smugglers have made their way. There is not a valley among these wild hills which has not witnessed many a gallant fight. There is not a hillside which has not run with streams of blood. There

is not a mountain among them all which has not its ghosts of slain men. The heath and ling have been trampled under the feet of thousands of soldiers, for in the old days there was no peace upon the Border, and every man was a soldier all his life. But, since the invasion of the Young Pretender, there has been no fighting on the Border. Smugglers have taken the place of the cattle-lifters, and peaceful ponies laden with forbidden goods go across the moor in place of horses ridden by men in iron. For those who love to be awed by the wildness of Nature, a place admirable and wonderful, but full of terror at all times to the heart of sensibility. I do not say, however, that the moors were terrible to any of those who crossed them on this cold and dark night, save for the darkness and the rain, and the fear that at any moment they might all go head first into a quag. The boy, to begin with, was quite insensible to any impressions which can be produced by natural objects; rocks, precipices, wild stretches of land, dark woods—all were alike to him. As for Dan, I suppose he never thought of anything at all. Mathew was too full of the gloomy forebodings which always precede the punishment of wickedness, to regard the things around him, and Nan, as insensible as the boy, was wishing only that the journey was over, because she was horribly cold and getting tired.

The boy led them, by that wonderful instinct, up the slope of the hill to a high level, where the wind was keener and the rain colder. He kept as nearly as possible to the same level, leading them round the middle heights upon the slopes of the great Fells and above the dales. The direct distance is not more than eight miles, but by reason of the winding of the way I suppose they must have doubled that distance. It was one o'clock when they left Alnham behind them, and it was already five before they came down the hill on the north side of Wind-Gate.

"Master," said the boy at last, pointing at something invisible, "yonder's Yetholm, and you are in Scotland."

Mathew started and sat upright in the saddle, throwing back his cloak. He was in Scotland. Why, then, his work was done. He laughed and laid his hand upon his prisoner's arm.

"My wife!" he cried. "Bear witness, Dan; my wife, I say."

"And the master—Glad to see you—"

Master, another dram to drink the leddy's health."

Mathew gave him his bottle. Dan took a deep draught, and then wiping the mouth of the vessel, handed it to the lady.

"Take a drop," he said, "it'll warm your blood after that long ride."

Then followed so prolonged a draught of the brandy, that Dan too, as Mathew had done five hours ago, looked to see the girl, unaccustomed to strong drink, fall from her saddle. But she did not. And honest Dan marvelled, remembering, besides, the vigour of her heels and the unexpected reality of that clout. A wife so gifted with manly strength of heel and hand, who could also drink so fair, seemed to this simple fellow a thing to be envied indeed.

As regards the run, let me say at once, so as to have done with it, that it was quite successful, and proved a profitable venture to all concerned, though Mathew, for his part, never showed any joy when the work of the night was spoken of. It was a bold thing to venture across the moors on so dark a night; no one in office looked for such a venture in the little village of Yetholm; and the stuff, taken in the farmers' carts to Kelso, was all sold off at once, therefore Mathew might have been proud of his exploit. But he was not. And when the old woman, accompanied by the boy, came home two days later and brought the news of what had happened, the success of the venture lost all its interest in presence of the wonderful tale they had to tell.

They rode into Yetholm a good while before daybreak, and the people of the inn, —little more than a little village ale-house—were still in their beds. It was now raining again, with a cold wind, while they waited for the house to be roused and the fire to be laid. Nan began now, indeed, though she had borne bravely the rough journey of the night, to feel the keen morning air and the fatigue of the long ride. Her limbs were numbed, and when, at last, the door was opened and the fire lit, Dan had to lift her off the pony and to carry her in. They placed her in a chair before the fire, where she sat huddled up in her cardinal and hood, refusing to take them off.

When all was safely bestowed, Mathew thought him of his bride, and came into the parlour, now bright with a cheerful fire and a candle. He threw off hat and cloak with a sigh of relief.

"Come," he said, "let us be friends, Drusilla, since we are married. Yes, child, married. You would have me no other way. Let us have no more sulking."

She answered nothing.

"Well, it matters not." Here the landlord and his wife, with Dan and a servant wench, came in together. "Something to eat," Mathew ordered. "Anything that you have. My wife is tired with her ride over the moors."

"Over the moors?" This was the landlady. "You haven't, surely, brought a leddy over the moors on sic a night as this?"

"Indeed, but I have," he replied. "Come, madam." He seized her by the arm and dragged her off the chair—oh, the gentle wooer!—so that she stood before him. "Bear witness, all of you," he said, taking her gloved hand. "This is my wife, my lawful wife, by Scottish law."

Now whether such is the Scottish law I know not at all, but in Northumberland it was always believed that, across the Border, such a form of words, before witnesses, constituted the whole of marriage required by law, although, by way of adding some grace of ceremony, the pair sometimes jumped over a broomstick, or wrote their names in a book, or gave a blacksmith a guinea.

"My lawful wife," Mathew repeated.

The bride, who had been standing with bent shoulders and bowed head, straightened herself and stood upright. Then the witnesses observed a very curious and remarkable thing. The face of the bridegroom, which should surely on such an occasion show a lively sense of happiness, expressed first astonishment, then uneasiness, and finally terror.

The cause of these successive emotions was simple. When Mathew had repeated his form of words he would have dropped his bride's hand, but she now held his, first with a gentle pressure, next with determination, and finally with a vice-like tenacity which amazed and filled him with strange fears.

Presently, still holding his hand, she spoke:

"I acknowledge Mathew Humble as my true and lawful husband!"

The voice was hoarse and rough. Mathew, with his left hand, tore off the hood. Before him stood, her mouth opening gradually to make room for the hoarse laugh which followed, no other than Sailor Nan herself, in her short petticoats and her cloth jacket,

with a woollen wrapper tied about her head.

"My husband!" she repeated; "my loving husband! Would ye believe it"—she addressed the company generally—"he's so fond o' me that he couldn't wait to have the banns put up, but must needs carry me off! Saw ye ever such a braw lover?"

They were all astounded; and when she laughed, still holding the astonished bridegroom by the hand, some of them trembled, because they knew not whether she was man or woman, her voice was so rough, her hair was so short, her jacket was so sailor-like.

"Ah, hinneys!" she laughed again hoarsely, because the air had touched her throat. "The bonny, bonny bride and the happy groom! Kiss your wife, my husband dear."

She threw herself upon his neck, and began to kiss his lips.

"You? You?" He tore away his hand from her grasp, tried to push her from him with violence, but she clung fast to him, and retreated step by step to the corner of the room. "You?"

"Yes, it's me, dearie—it's me. Did ye ever hear the like? To fall in love with an old woman of seventy, like me, and to run away with her! I never looked to get another husband. There's a spirit for you! There's a bold spirit! Mathew dear, when shall we go back? Oh, the wedding-feast that we will have! Well, we women love a lad of mettle. Is there a boy in Warkworth, except my man here, who would carry his wife all the way across the moors when he might have had me asked in church?"

Dan, one of those who are naturally slow to understand things unless they fall out exactly as is expected, had by this time succeeded in comprehending the whole. He had, he now perceived, carried off the wrong woman, which fully accounted for the vigour of the kicks, the amazing strength of the clout, and the capacity for strong drink.

"Nan!" he cried. "It's our Nan!"

"It is, ye lubber," she replied; "and no one else."

He then began to laugh too. He laughed so loud and so long, being a man who seldom sees a joke, and then cannot make enough of it, that the landlord, the landlady, and the servant-girl caught the infection, and they all laughed too. Mathew raged and swore. This made Dan laugh the

louder and the longer. Mathew ceased to swear; he threw himself into a chair, with his hands in his pockets, and sat, cheeks red and eyes flashing, until the storm of mirth subsided. Then his dainty and delicate bride banged her great fist upon the table.

"No sheering off now," she cried. "You're my man, and a merry and a happy life you shall lead. Mates and jolly sailors all, this is my third husband. The first, he was hanged; the second, he hanged himself; better luck to the third. What a wife he's got!—what a wife! Now then, rum for this honourable company, and a fiddle for the wedding; and more rum and tobacco, and more rum. Stir about, I say." She produced a bo's'n's whistle, and blew a long shrill call. "Stir about, or I'll rope's-end the whole crew. Rum, I say; more rum for this honourable company!"

With these words she sprang into the middle of the room, and began to dance a hornpipe with the most surprising skill and agility.

CHAPTER XL THE SALE OF THE COTTAGE.

WHEN the old woman came home with the boy, the story which she had to tell surpassed all her yarns of salt-sea experience. She told her tale nightly, in exchange for glasses of strong drink. And even Cuddy, the boy, was in request, and sold his information for mugs of beer. The men laughed at Mathew's discomfiture. To most men, indeed, the punishment of wickedness is always an occasion for mirth rather than for solemn reflection. They laugh at suffering, especially when it is unexpected; and if their dearest friend experiences a misfortune when he most expects a stroke of luck, they laugh. When a vagabond is flogged at the cart-tail; when a shrew is ducked; when a miserable starving wretch is clapped into stocks or pillory, they laugh. That is the way of men. But I have observed that they do not laugh at their own afflictions. Everybody, therefore, including the Vicar and his Worship, laughed at Mathew's discomfiture. They went so far as to say that Mr. Carnaby told the story to my Lord of Northumberland, who was entertaining my Lord Bishop of Durham, and that both prelate and peer laughed until the valets had to unloose their cravats. Yet I cannot see why one should laugh because a young man is mated to an old wife, expecting to have carried off a young one. To me, it seems

as if we should first condemn the crime of abduction, and next, bow to the rod.

After the first laughter, which was like an explosion, or a great thunder-storm, one of those during which the rain-water rattles and slates fall off the roof: a universal burst of laughter when all the men ran together laughing their loudest, holding each other up, loosing neck-ties, pumping on the apoplectic, and encouraging each other to fresh hilarity by pointing to Nan the bride: the question naturally arose if anything should be done to mark their sense of the attempted crime by those in authority. A most grievous and intolerable thing it was, indeed, that a young woman should be violently kidnapped and carried away like a sailor by a press-gang; forced to ride thirty miles and more on a winter's night, across the cold and rainy Fells; married willy-nilly in the morning without church or parson; and this when she had not once, but many times, refused so much as to listen to proposals of marriage from the man. All were agreed that this was a thing not to be permitted. Yet, what could be done? To run away with a girl of her own free will and accord, and when she would marry the man but for wickedness of guardians, is a different thing; many a maiden has fled across the Border with her lover, amidst the sympathy of her friends. But in this case it was like the carrying away of the Sabine women, and no words could be found by the moralist too strong to condemn the act.

While everybody talked about it, that is to say, for a whole week, there was so much indignation that if Mathew had appeared it would have gone hard with him among the men, to say nothing of the women, who would think of no punishment too bad for him. The townsfolk talked of ducking in the river, of pillory and stocks, and I confess that the thought of Mathew in the pillory was not disagreeable to me. Yet, considering the way of the world, perhaps, if he had been young, handsome, and of pleasant speech, he might have been forgiven the attempted abduction, on the plea of love inordinate. One man, we know, may steal a horse—but then he must be comely and generous—while another, if he is churlish and harsh, is clapped into gaol for looking over a hedge. While, however, they talked, Mathew kept away, nor did he return for three or four weeks, leaving his private affairs neglected; and no one knew where he was in hiding.

We had, however, a visit from Barbara.

She came, she said, not out of any love to me or my mother, who had used words so injurious as regards herself, but to express her abhorrence of the crime which her unhappy brother had attempted, and her thankfulness that this madness of his was defeated. She said that she knew nothing whatever of him; where he was or what he was doing; but she hoped that when he returned he would be in a better frame of mind, and feel the remorse which ought to follow such an action. As for the pretended marriage with the old woman, she said that was a thing not to be considered seriously. My mother received her excuses coldly, and she presently went away, after another attempt to discover whether I knew anything fresh about "the boy." She desired to know, she said, not out of curiosity, because she was not a curious person, as everybody knew, but because she feared that I might, by representing the late affair in its worst light, bring about a hostile feeling and even a conflict between her brother and the boy, which could not fail of being disastrous to the latter. My mother reassured her on this point, because, she said, Mathew was already well acquainted with Ralph's case, and, having shown so much bravery in the late affair, which took two men to carry off one woman, would now most certainly have the courage to turn a submissive back to the chastiser when he should appear. Barbara thereupon went away. Though I loved her not, I could not but feel pity for a woman who had done and suffered so much on behalf of this thankless brother. She was grown much older to look at during the last year or two; her face was pinched, and wrinkles had multiplied round her eyes with her constant cares. This is an age when gentlemen of exalted rank think it no sin to be put to bed helpless after a debauch of wine or punch; I hope that more sober customs may shortly prevail; else, one knows not what will become of us all. Yet, though drunkenness is in fashion, I think nothing can be more miserable for a woman than to sit, as Barbara sat daily, knowing that the only man in the world she cares for is slowly getting drunk by himself in another room, which is what Mathew did. As to the idle talk about the other will and the rightful heir, I know not what she believed in her heart, or how far she joined in the wicked designs of her brother, which were about to be frustrated.

Then Mr. Carnaby, accompanied by his

lady and by the Vicar, came in person to express his horror of the crime, and his satisfaction that it was providentially prevented.

"We have discussed," said his Worship, "the action which we should take in the matter. At present all we have to go upon is the evidence of Nan, who is, she says, Mathew's wife, so that if such be veritably the case she cannot give evidence in the matter at all, and that of the boy Cuddy, an ignorant, half-wild lad, who knows not the nature of an oath. Abduction is a great crime; but then Mathew, whatever were his intentions, my child, did actually only run away with an old woman, and she makes no complaint, but rather rejoices, while he is rendered ridiculous. To kidnap a young girl is a hanging matter; but then, my dear, you were not kidnapped. In short, we feel that to bring Mathew to justice would be difficult and perhaps impossible."

To be sure, one would not wish to hang any man for the worst of crimes, and we had no desire to bring Mathew before any court of law or justice, being quite contented that the offender should feel certain of sharp and speedy justice if he made another such attempt.

"Can we not see him, at least," asked my mother, "placed in pillory?"

"I would place him in pillory," his Worship went on, "if the old woman who now calls herself his wife—Heaven knows with what right—would lodge a complaint. But she will not. He deserves pillory at the least. And as for rotten eggs, I would myself bring even a basket of new-laid eggs, so that he should want for nothing. And I would condescend to throw them. But she will not complain. She even laughs and boasts that she has gotten a young husband. And then, which is a difficult point in this doubtful case"—his Worship blushed and looked confused, while the Vicar hemmed, and Mistress Carnaby coughed—"he was running a venture across the Border, and no one knows—I say that no one can tell—who may be compromised in this affair as to what he took across or what he brought back, for though Mathew hath great faults, there is no one more skilled—more skilled, I say."

"No one," said the Vicar, which completed the sentence for his Worship.

"Wherefore, my dear girl," continued his Worship, "I propose waiting until the man returns, when I will reprimand him with such severity as will serve to deter

him—and any others of a like mind with himself—from a renewal of his wickedness."

Mathew did come back, three weeks later; but, although his Worship sent the Fugleman, carrying his pike, to the mill with a command that Mathew should instantly repair to him for admonition, and although the Vicar also repaired to Mr. Carnaby's house in his best gown in order to receive the offender, and to give greater authority to the discipline, Mathew came not. He positively and discourteously refused to obey.

There, it would seem, was a direct breaking of the law, or, at least, contempt for authority, upon which imprisonment, I dare say, might have followed. But, whether from leniency, or on account of that difficulty connected with the late venture, his Worship refrained from severity, and ordered instead that Mathew, for violence and contumacy, should do penance in the church. Here, indeed, was righteous retribution! He would stand, I thought, in the very place where he had caused Ralph to stand nine years before; he would be made to rise up before all the people, and, in a loud voice, to ask their pardon, and to recite the Lord's Prayer. I hope I am not a vindictive woman, yet I confess that I rejoiced on learning from the Fugleman that this punishment had been meted out to the evil-doer. We both rejoiced, and we congratulated each other, because we thought that Ralph would also rejoice. Little did we know of that great and lofty mind, when we foolishly imagined that he would ever rejoice over the fall of his enemy.

There was great excitement in the town when it became publicly known by means of the barber, who had it direct from his Worship, that this godly discipline was to be enforced on the person of Mathew Humble—a substantial man, a statesman, a miller, a man supposed (but erroneously) to be wealthy, and a man already thirty-four years of age or thereabouts. Why, for a school-boy, or a lad of sixteen, or a plain rustic to stand up in this white sheet was joy enough, but for such a show of such a man, this, if you please, was rapture indeed for the simple people. I confess that I for one looked forward with pleasure to the spectacle.

Alas! who would believe that man could be found so daring! Mathew refused contumaciously to perform the penance! This was a great blow and heavy disappointment to all of us; and we looked to see

the Vicar excommunicate him. But he did not, saying that disobedience to the Church brought of itself excommunication without need of any form of words. Let Mathew look to his own soul. And as there seemed no means of enforcing the punishment if the offender refused to undergo it, there was nothing more to be said.

The behaviour of Nan at this time was worthy of admiration. On Mathew's return, but not until then, she walked to the mill and informed Barbara that, as her brother's wife, she was herself the mistress, but that, being accustomed to her own cottage, she should not for the present molest her in her occupation.

Then she sought her husband.

It was really terrible to mark how the ravages of drink and disappointment together had made havoc with the appearance of this unfortunate man. Unfortunate, I call him, though his punishment was but the just reward of his iniquities. The failure of his plot; the consciousness of the ridicule which overwhelmed him; his shame and discomfiture; the thought of the old woman whom he had called his wife; the messages which he had received from his Worship and the Vicar—his disobedience being connected in some way with partnership in the recent venture; a dreadful vague looking forward to the future, and the constant terror lest Ralph should return, filled his mind with agitation, and gave him no peace, night or day. He neglected the work of mill and farm; he would take no meals save by himself, and he drank continually.

He looked up from his half-drunken torpor when Nan came in.

"I expected you before," he said.

"What are you going to do?"

She poured out a dram and tossed it off.

"I came to see my bonny husband," she said, "before I am a widow once more. Eh, man, it's an unlucky wife ye have gotten."

"Wife!" he repeated; "wife! Yes, I supposed you would pretend——"

"Hark ye, brother," cried Nan, bringing down her cudgel on the table with an emphasis which reminded Mathew uneasily of the second husband's lot; "hark ye! Sail on another tack, or you'll have a broadside that'll rake you fore and aft from stem to stern. Wife I am; husband you are; wherefore all that is yours is mine." She hitched a rope into the handle of the stone jar containing the brandy and jerked it over her shoulder. "The mill is

mine, so long as it is yours, which won't be long, shipmet. Last night I read your fortune, my lad. By all I can discover, you and me shall part company before long. But whether you will hang yourself, like my second man, or be hanged, like my first; or whether you will be knocked o' the head—which is too good for such as you; or whether you will die by reason of taking too much rum aboard, which is fatal to many an honest Jack; or whether you will die by hand of doctors, whereby the land-lubbers do perish by multitudes—I know not. Short will be our company; so, as long as we sail together, let us share and share alike, and be merry and drink about. Money—now, I want money."

He refused absolutely to let her have any money. Without any more words, this terrible woman prepared for action. That is to say, she took off her rough sailor's jacket, rolled up her sleeves, and seized the cudgel with a gesture and look so menacing that Mathew hauled down his colours.

"How much do you want?" he asked.

"Short will be the voyage," she said. "Give me ten guineas. Yes, I will take ten guineas to begin with. But don't think it's pay-day. I'm not paid off, nor shall be so long as—— Pity 'tis that I can't read those cards plainer. Well, my dearie, I'm going. If I think I should like the mill better than my own cottage, I'll come and stay here. You shall see, off and on, plenty of your wife. Ho! ho! The bonny bride! and the happy groom!"

She left him for that time. But she went often, during the brief space which remained of Mathew's reign at the mill. Each time she came she demanded money, and rum or usquebaugh; each time she threatened to live with her husband; each time she terrified Barbara with the prospect of staying there. And the man sat still in his room, brooding over the past, and thinking, not of repentance, but of more wickedness.

One day, he rode away without telling his sister whither he was going or what he designed. He did not return that night, but two days later he rode into the town, accompanied by a grave and elderly gentleman, and after leaving the horses at the inn, he walked to our cottage. I saw them at the garden-gate, and my heart felt like lead, because I saw very clearly what was going to happen.

In fine, I felt certain that the money would be demanded and our house sold.

Mathew, goaded by his sister, who clamoured without ceasing for the money supposed to have been lent to us, and unable any longer to endure his suspense and anxiety regarding their cousin, resolved to bring matters to an issue. Fortunate indeed was it for us he had delayed so long.

They came in, therefore, and the grave old gentleman opened the business. He said that he was an attorney from Morpeth; that the mortgage, of which mention had already been made to Mistress Hetherington, had been drawn up by him at the request of Mr. Mathew Humble; that he had witnessed the signature of my father, and that the business, in short, was regularly conducted in accordance with the custom and the requirements of the law.

I asked him if he had seen the money paid to my father. He replied that he had not, but that it was unnecessary. I informed him thereupon that the money never had been paid at all, but that my father, a demented person, as was very well known, yet not so dangerous or so mad that he must be locked up, was persuaded by Mathew that he was signing an imaginary deed of gift conveying lands which existed only in his own mind, because he had no land.

The lawyer made no reply to this at all.

"Now, mistress," said Mathew roughly, "is the time to show the proofs you talked about."

"My proofs, sir," I addressed the lawyer, "are, first, that my father believes himself prodigiously rich, and would scorn to borrow money of such as Mathew Humble; next, that he perfectly well remembers signing this document, which he thought a deed of gift; thirdly, that we know positively that he has had no money at all in his possession; fourthly, that he denies with indignation having borrowed money; fifthly, that Mathew, like everybody else, knew of his delusions, and would certainly never have lent the money; sixthly, that two hundred pounds is a vast sum, and could not have been received and spent without our knowledge. Lastly, that Mathew was known to be a base and wicked wretch who even tried to kidnap and carry off a girl whom he wished to marry."

"Every one of these proofs," said my mother, "is by itself enough for any reasonable person."

The lawyer replied very earnestly that he had nothing to do with proving the debt; that he came to carry out the

instructions of his client, and to give us a week's notice—which was an act of mercy, because no clause of notice had been inserted in the mortgage; that the house would be sold unless the money lent was paid; that it was not his duty nor his business to advise us, but his own client; that the law of England provides a remedy for everything by the help of attorneys, and that, by the blessing of Heaven, attorneys abound, and may be obtained in any town. Finally, he exceeded his duty by his client in counselling us to put our affairs in the hands of some skilled and properly qualified adviser.

This said, he bowed low and went away, followed by Mathew.

But Mathew returned half an hour later and found me alone.

"You told me," he said, "six months ago and more, that should I attempt any harm to you and yours, you would write to the boy. I waited. If your story was true, you would have written to him at once, out of fear. But your story was not true. Ah, women are all liars. I ought to have known that. Barbara says so, and she ought to know."

"Go on, Mathew," I said.

"I waited. If your story had been true, the boy would have hastened home. Well, I thought I would give you another chance. I would carry you off. That would make him wince, if he was living. Yet he has not come."

Did one ever hear the like? To bring his own terrors to an end, or to an issue, he would have made me his unwilling and wretched wife.

"Now I've found you out. Why didn't I think of it before? I asked the post-boy. Never a letter, he truly swears, has been delivered to you—never a one. So it is all a lie from the beginning. Very good, then. Marry me, or sold up you shall be, and into the cold streets shall you go."

I bade him begone, and he went, terrified, perhaps, at the fury with which I spoke. Of this I forbear to say more.

When we sought the advice of Mr. Carnaby, we found that he entertained an opinion about law and justice which seemed to differ from that of the Morpeth lawyer.

"Your proofs," he said, "though to me they are clear and sufficient to show that Mathew is a surprising rogue, would go for nothing before a court. And I doubt

much whether any attorney would be found to undertake, without guarantee of costs, so great a business as a civil action. Justice, my child, in this country, as well as all other countries, may hardly be obtained by any but the rich, and only by them at the cost of vexatious delays, cheats, impositions, evasions, and the outlay of great sums upon a rascally attorney. Beware of the craft. Let the man do his worst, you still have friends, my dear."

So spoke this kind and benevolent man. I am sure that his deeds would have proved as good as his words had they been called for.

We told no one in the town, otherwise I am sure there would have been a great storm of indignation against Mathew, and perhaps we did wrong to keep the thing a secret. But my mother was a Londoner, and did not like to have her affairs made more than could be helped the subject of scandal and village gossip.

It was now already the middle of December; we should, therefore, be turned out into the street in winter. As for our slender stock of money, that was reduced to a few guineas. Yet was I not greatly cast down, because, whatever else might happen, the time was come when I might expect an answer. In eighteen months, or even less, a ship might sail to India and return to port.

Ralph's letter would set all right. I know not, now, what I expected; I lived in a kind of Fool's Paradise. Ralph was my hope, my anchor. I looked not for money but for protection; he would be a shield. When the Fagleman came to the cottage we would fall to congratulating ourselves upon the flight of time which brought my letter the nearer. He even made notches on a long pole for the days which might yet remain. Yet, oh, what a slender reed was this on which I leaned! For my letter to him might have miscarried. Who is to ensure the safety of a letter for so many thousand miles? Or his reply might be lost on board the ship. A letter is a small thing and easily lost. Or he might be up the country with some native prince; or he might be fighting; or he might be too much occupied to write. A slender reed of hope indeed. Yet I had faith. Call it not a Fool's Paradise; 'twas the Paradise of Love.

Then came the day, the last day, when the money must be paid or we lose our house. That day I can never forget. It was the twenty-third of December. The

mummers, I know, were getting ready for the next evening. In the night we were awakened by the waits singing before our house :

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,"

and I, who ought to have taken the words for an exhortation to lift my heart to Heaven, lifted it only as high as—my lover. To be sure, he was always a good deal nearer Heaven than his unworthy sweetheart.

In the night there was snow, and when the sun rose the garden was beautiful, and the leafless trees had every little twig painted white ; a clear bright day, such as seldom comes to this county of rain and wind in the month of December. If one has to be thrust into the street, one would wish for a day of sunshine. Is it not a monstrous thing that this injustice should be possible ? Will there ever come a time when justice and equity will be administered, like fresh air and spring water, for nothing ?

So certain was Mathew of his prey that he sent the crier round at nine in the morning to announce the sale for noon. And directly after eleven he came himself, with the attorney ; and a man to conduct the auction or sale of the house. We put together, in order to carry with us, our wearing apparel. Mathew was for preventing us from taking anything—even, I believe, the clothes we stood in—out of the house. Even the Family Bible must stay, and the very account-books ; but he was rebuked by his lawyer, who informed him that the mortgage included only the tenement or building, but not its contents. We should keep our beds, then. But where to bestow them ? Whither to go ? My heart began to sink. I could have sat down and cried, had that been of any avail, and if my mother had not set a better example and kept so brave a face.

"The daughter of a substantial London merchant, my dear," she said, "must not show signs of distress before such cattle"—she meant the attorney and his honest client. "Get your things together, and we will see where we can find a shelter. My poor old man shall not feel the pinch of cold and hunger, though we work our fingers to the bone." Her lip trembled as she spoke.

Meantime my father was giving a hearty welcome to the astonished attorney, whom he considered as a visitor.

"In this poor house, sir," he said with

a lofty air, "though we have the conveniences which wealth can bestow, we have not the splendour. I trust, sir, that you may give me the pleasure of a visit at my town house, where, I believe, her ladyship will show you rooms worthy of any nobleman's house, not to speak of a plain City Knight, like your humble servant."

The attorney regarded him with wonder, but answered not. I believe he understood by this one speech how impossible it was that this poor man could have borrowed his client's money.

At stroke of noon the sale was to commence. But as yet there were no buyers. No one was there to bid except Mathew himself, who was impatient to begin.

It wanted five minutes of noon when Mr. Carnaby appeared, bearing his gold-headed stick, and preceded by the Fugleman with his pike, to show that the visit was official. He was followed by a dozen or so of the townsmen, now aware that something out of the common was about to happen.

"Go on with the sale," cried Mathew impatiently ; "it is twelve o'clock."

"Stop !" said his Worship. "Sir," he addressed the lawyer, "you will first satisfy me by what right you enter a private house, and next by what authority you are selling it."

The attorney replied with submission and outward show of respect that he was within his powers, in proof of which he exhibited papers the nature of which I know not, concluding with a hope that his honour was satisfied.

"Why, sir," said Mr. Carnaby, "so far as you are concerned, I may be. I am also satisfied that this business is the conspiracy of a villain against the peace and happiness of an innocent girl."

"With respect, sir," said the lawyer, "the words conspiracy and villain are libellous."

"I name no names," but he looked at Mathew, who shifted his feet and endeavoured to seem unconscious. "I name no names," he repeated, shaking his forefinger in Mathew's face, "yet villain is the man who would ruin a helpless family because a virtuous woman refuses to marry him. Villain, I say !"

He banged the floor with his great stick, so that everybody in the room trembled.

"I do not think, sir," said Mathew, "that your office entitles you to offer impediment to a just and lawful sale."

"Prate not to me, Master Kidnapper."

"If," continued Mathew, "Mr. Hetherington disputes my claim, here is my lawyer, who will receive his notice of action. For myself, I want my own and nothing more. Give me justice."

"I would to Heaven, sir, I could," said his Worship. "Go on with your iniquitous sale."

It appeared at first as if no one would bid at all for the cottage, though by this time the room was full. Then Mathew offered fifty pounds. Mr. Carnaby bid fifty-five pounds. Mathew advanced five pounds. Mr. Carnaby bid sixty-five pounds.

Mr. Carnaby was not rich; yet he had formed the benevolent design of buying the house, so that we might not be turned out, even if the rent would be uncertain. Mathew wanted not only the amount of the (pretended) mortgage, but also the pleasure of turning us out. Ah! where was Ralph now? Where was the "boy" to whom I was going to write for protection if he dared to move?

"One hundred and ninety!" said Mathew.

"One hundred and ninety-five!" said his Worship.

"Two hundred!" said Mathew.

Mr. Carnaby hesitated. He doubted whether the cottage of six rooms and the two acres of ground in which it stood were worth more. The hammer went up. He thought of us and our helpless situation.

"Two hundred and five!" he said.

"Two hundred and ten!" said Mathew.

Again Mr. Carnaby hesitated; again he saw the hammer in the air; again he advanced.

"Two hundred and ninety-five!" said his Worship, mopping his face.

"Three hundred!" said Mathew.

"Any advance upon three hundred?" asked the auctioneer.

Mr. Carnaby shook his head.

"Villains all," he said, "I can afford no more. I cannot afford so much. Poor Drusilla! Thou must go out after all."

"Going! going!" cried the man, looking round.

"FIVE HUNDRED!"

Mathew sprang to his feet with a cry as of sudden pain, for he knew the voice. More than that, in the doorway he saw the man.

He reeled and would have fallen but that some one held him; his cheeks were white, his eyes were staring. The blow he

had so long dreaded had fallen at last. His enemy was upon him.

The figure in the doorway was that of a gentleman, tall and stately, still in the bloom and vigour of early manhood, gallantly dressed in scarlet with gold-laced hat, laced ruffles, diamond buckles, and his sword in a crimson sash. Alas! for Mathew. The girl had told no lie.

The Fugleman, being on duty, contemplated things without emotion, even so surprising a thing as the return of the wanderer. But he saluted his superior officer, and then, grounding his pike, looked straight before him.

This was the answer—this was the reply to my letter. Every woman in love is a prophet. I knew, being in love, that my sweetheart would make all well; I knew not how; he would bring peace and protection with him, for those I loved as well as for myself.

Great and marvellous are the ways of Providence. I knew not, nor could I so much as hope that the answer would be such as it was—nothing short of my lover's return, to go abroad no more.

CHAPTER XII. "GOD REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN."

WHAT remains to be told?

Ralph was home again. What more could I have prayed for?

While these things went on we were sitting in the kitchen. In my mother's eyes I seemed to read a reproach which was not there, I believe, but in my own heart. I had prophesied smooth things, and promised help from some mysterious quarter which had not come.

"There are five guineas left," said my mother. "When these are gone, what shall we do?"

I tried to comfort her, but, alas! I could find no words. Oh, how helpless are women, since they cannot even earn bread enough to live upon. When the breadwinner can work no longer, hapless is our lot. What were we to do when these five guineas were gone? For, if I could find work to keep my fingers going from morn till night, I could not make enough to keep even myself, without counting my father and my mother. What should we do when this money was gone? We must live upon charity, or we must go upon the parish. At the moment of greatest need my faith failed me. I thought no more of the letter I was to receive; I ceased to hope; my Paradise disappeared. I was nothing in

the world but a helpless woman, a beggar, the daughter of poor, old, broken-down people, whose father was little better than a helpless lunatic.

We heard from the parlour, where they were holding the auction, a murmur of voices, some high and some low. Suddenly there was a change; from a murmur of words there arose a roar of words—a tumult of words. Strange and wonderful! I should have recognised the voice which most I loved. But I took little heed. The misery of the moment was very great.

"So"—now, indeed, I heard the voice of his Worship, which was a full, deep, and sonorous voice—"so may all traitors and villains be confounded! Kidnapper, where are now thy wiles?"

I heard afterwards how Mathew would have slunk away, but they told him (it was not true) that his wife was without brandishing her cudgel. So he stayed, while his attorney, ignorant of what all this meant, congratulated his client upon the sale of the cottage. Five hundred pounds, he said, would not only suffice to pay his own bill of costs, which now, with expenses of travelling and loss of time, amounted to a considerable sum, but would also repay Mathew's mortgage of two hundred pounds in full, and still leave a small sum for the unfortunate gentleman they had sold up. Mathew made no reply. He looked fearfully into his cousin's face; it was stern and cold. There was no hope to be gleaned from that face, but the certainty of scrutiny and condemnation. What had he done to merit leniency? Conscience—or remorse—told him that he had tried to kidnap his cousin's sweetheart; to drag her down to destitution; while, as regards his own trust and guardianship, none knew better than himself the state in which his accounts would be found.

The words of Mr. Carnaby reached every ear. But yet I heard them not, as I sat looking before me in mere despair. For I knew not what to hope for, what to advise, or what to do.

Then the door was thrown open, and there was a trampling of feet which I regarded not at all, or as only part of this misery. The feet, I supposed, belonged to the man who was coming to turn us out. I buried my face in my hands and burst into violent weeping.

"Is this some fresh misfortune?" It was my mother who sprang to her feet and spoke. "Are you come, sir, to say that we owe another two hundred pounds?"

What would you have with us on such a day! We have nothing for you, sir, nothing at all, whoever you are; we are stripped naked."

"Madam," this was his Worship's voice, "you know not who this gentleman is. Look not for more misfortunes, but for joy and happiness."

Joy and happiness! What joy? What happiness? I began to prick up ears, but without much hope and with no faith.

"My lord"—this time it was my father, who saw before him a splendid stranger, and concluded in his madness that it was some great nobleman come to visit him. "My lord, I thank you for the honour of this visit. My lady will call the men and maids. I fear you are fatigued with travel. You shall take, my lord, a single bowl of turtle soup, as a snack, or stay-stomach, the finest ever made even for the Lord Mayor, with a glass or two of Imperial Tokay, the rarest in any cellar, before your dinner. Not a word, my lord, not a word, till you are refreshed; not a word, I insist."

At these utterances I raised my head, but before I had time to look around me, a hand was laid upon my shoulder, while a voice whispered in my ear, "Drusy!"

Oh, we foolish women! For when the thing we most long for is vouchsafed, instead of prayers and praise upon banded knees, we fall to crying and to laughing, both together.

Why, when I recovered a little, they were all concerning themselves about me, when they ought to have been doing honour to Ralph. The Fugleman had a glass of cold water in his hand; my mother was bathing my palms; Sailor Nan was burning a feather; my sweetheart was holding my head; and my father was assuring his Worship that nothing less than the King's own physician should attend his daughter, unless she presently recovered. He also whispered with much gravity that he had long since designed his Drusilla for his lordship, just arrived, who, though of reduced fortunes, was a nobleman of excellent qualities, and would make her happy.

We heard, later, that Ralph brought with him an attorney from Newcastle, a gentleman very learned in the law, and the terror of all the rogues on the banks of the Tyne. With this gentleman and a clerk, beside his own servants, he rode first to the mill.

He found Barbara engaged in her usual work of knitting, with the Bible before her

open at some chapter of prophetic woe. No change in her, except that she looked thinner, and the crow's-feet lay about her eyes. She recognised him, but showed no emotion.

"You are come home again," she said. "I have expected this. Mathew said the girl lied, but he was afraid, and I knew she did not. Girls do not lie about such things. You come at a fine time, when your sweet-heart is begging her bread."

"What?" asked Ralph.

"I said she was begging her bread. She said you were prosperous. If fine clothes mean aught you may be. Lord grant they were honestly come by."

"I will now, Colonel Embleton," said the attorney, "place my clerk in possession and seal everything."

"Where is Mathew?" asked Ralph.

"He is in the town. You will find him selling their cottage—Drusilla's cottage. By this time your dainty girl will be in the road, bag and baggage."

"What?"

"Pride is humbled. The girl has begun to repent of her stubbornness. Of course so fine a gentleman as you would scorn a beggar wench."

With such words did this foolish and spiteful woman inflame the heart of a man whom she should have conciliated with words of welcome.

He left her and rode into the town with such speed as the snow, now two feet deep, would allow.

An hour later, Mathew, pale and trembling, rushed breathless into the mill.

"Has he been here?"

Barbara nodded.

Mathew went hastily to his room. Here he found the attorney with his clerk.

"These are my papers," he cried, now in desperation. "Everything is mine. The house is mine, the mill is mine, the farm is mine."

"Gently, gently," said the lawyer. "Let us hear."

Mathew played his last card.

"A second will was found," he said; "it is in the desk."

"We will wait," said the lawyer, "until the return of Colonel Embleton."

When Ralph came back, accompanied by Mr. Carnaby, he found Mathew waiting for him.

"Now," said the lawyer, "let us see this second will."

He opened the desk and drew forth the paper which Mathew pointed out. When

he had unfolded and looked at it for a moment, he looked curiously at Mathew.

"This," he said, "is your second will?"

"It is," Mathew replied. "Found five years ago, and——"

"Quite enough," said the lawyer.

"Friend," he had by this time compared the signature with that of the first will, "I make no charge, I only inform you as a fact, that this document is valueless, as bearing neither date nor witnesses, and if it did, it would still be valueless, because the signature is a forgery, plain and palpable. It will hang someone if it is put forward."

Mathew dropped his hands by his side. This was the fruit of his labours. He had forged the will; he had made it of no use by neglecting the witnesses; he had forged it so clumsily that he was at once detected.

"Any well-wisher of yours, sir," said the lawyer, "would recommend you to put that paper in the fire."

Mathew did so without a word.

"Sir," said the lawyer, "you have saved your neck. Have you any more to say about the will?"

He had no more to say. The plots and designs of nine years came to this lame and impotent conclusion.

"Then, Mr. Humble," the attorney continued, "I have nothing more to say than this: Colonel Embleton expects an accurate statement of accounts and payment to him of all sums due to him without delay."

Mathew made no reply; he was defeated. He left the room, and presently, one of them looking through the open door, saw him leave the house with his sister.

Ralph spoke not one single word to him, good or bad. By this time he had heard of Mathew's attempted abduction and all his iniquities. There was no room in his heart for pity.

In the morning Sailor Nan came to draw her pay. She heard that her husband had deserted her. She lamented the fact, because she had intended to be kept in pork, rum, and tobacco so long as he was alive. But she was easily consoled with a jorum of steaming punch.

Thus vanished from amongst us one who had wrought so much evil, for which I hope that we have long since entirely forgiven him (but he was a desperate villain), and we never knew what became of him.

It was ten years later that Barbara came back alone.

We found her in the porch one summer

evening. She was worn and thin, and dressed in dreadful rags.

"Oh," I cried, moved to pity by her misery, "come in and eat, and let me find some better clothes for you."

She refused, but she took a cup of milk.

"I want to see the boy," she replied in her old manner of speech.

When Ralph came home she said what she had to say.

"Mathew ought to have had the mill. If it had been his, he would not have taken to drink and evil courses. You were an interloper, and we both hated the sight of you. When you went away, I used to pray that you might never come back. The waiting for you and the fear of you made him wicked. That is all I have to say."

"Where is Mathew?"

"Dead. Ask me no more about him. He is dead."

Ralph led her, unresisting, into the house.

"Wife," he said to me, "you have heard Barbara's confession. I, too, have had hard thoughts about her. Let us forgive, as we hope for forgiveness."

She stayed with us that night—an unwilling and ungracious guest—and the next day Ralph placed her in a cottage, and gave her an allowance of money, which she took without thanks. Perhaps her heart grew less bitter as years fell upon her; but I know not, for she died and made no sign.

On that year Christmas Day fell on a Thursday. Now, Ralph, who, though a grave man and the colonel of his regiment, showed more than the customary impatience of lovers, would be content with nothing short of being married on the very next day after his return. It is almost incredible that he should have had the forethought to bring with him a special license, so that we were not obliged to have the banns read out. Could I refuse him anything? Therefore, on the Wednesday morning, the very next day after he came back, we were married in presence of all the town, I believe, man, woman, and child, while the bells rang out, and our joyful hearts were warm, despite the cold without. I was so poor in worldly goods that I must have gone to the sacred ceremony with nothing better than my plain stuff frock, but for the benevolence of good

Mrs. Carnaby, who lent me a most beautiful brocaded silk gown, which, with all kinds of foreign gauds, such as necklaces, bracelets, and jewels for the hair, which my lover—nay, my bridegroom—bestowed upon me, made me so fine that his Worship was so good as to say that never a more beautiful bride had been married, or would hereafter be married, in Warkworth Church.

Thus do fine feathers make fine birds. When the next bride is married in brocaded silk, with a hoop, her hair done by the barber, and her homely person decorated with jewels, people will be found to say the same thing. Yet, since my husband, who is the only person I must consider, was so good as to find his wife beautiful, should I not rejoice and be thankful for this strange power of one's outward figure—women cannot understand it—which bewitches men and robs them of their natural sense until they become used to it.

After the wedding we went home to the mill, where my husband spread a great feast. In the evening came the mummers with Sailor Nan, who drank freely of punch, and wished us joy in language more nautical than polite. His Worship slept at the mill because he was overcome with the abundance and strength of the punch. Even the Fugleman, for the first time in man's memory, had to be carried to bed, preserving his stiffness of back even in the sleep of intoxication. And the next day we had another royal feast, to which all were invited who had known my dear husband in his youth. But to me it was a continual feast to be in the presence of my dear, to have my hand in his and to rejoice in the warmth of his steadfast eyes.

We are all, I hope, Christian folk, wherefore no one will be surprised to hear that on the morning of the day after the marriage, which was Christmas Day, after the singing of the hymn, "When shepherds watch their flocks by night," my husband, giving me his hand, led me forth before all the people, and in their presence thanked God solemnly for his safe return, and for other blessings (I knew full well what these meant). Then the Fugleman leading, his pike held at salute, he recited the Lord's Prayer. Thus in seemly and solemn fashion was the long sorrow of nine years turned into a joy which will endure, I doubt not, beyond this earthly pilgrimage.

The Right of Translating any portion of "LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY" is reserved by the Author.



